



2 ladies lovingly craft pastillas wrappers that are just thrown away

A Filipina heads the Manila bureau of Al Jazeera English channel, the network known for exclusive audio visuals of Osama bin Laden

Check out the wish lists of poor Pinoy kids and play Santa to them so they'll feel it's Christmas

Golden Globe bets topped by double nominees Clint Eastwood for Best Director, Leonardo DiCaprio for Best Actor, Helen Mirren for Best Actress

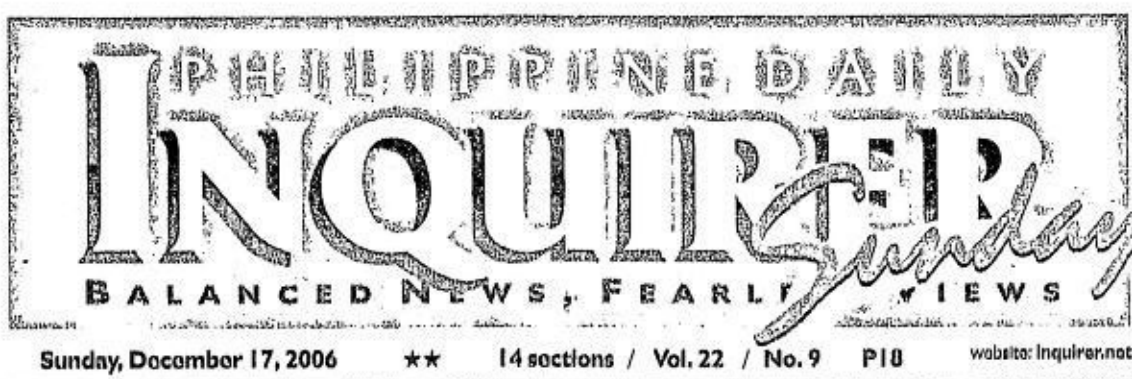


She thought 'Premyo Sa Resibo' P1-M prize a hoax

By Jool Tan
Contributor

MINELA DOLOR HAD NEVER WON A RAFFLE. So it was a great leap of faith for her to send a text entry to the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.'s "Premyo sa Resibo" promo.

A month later, Dolor was deluged with calls SHE THOUGHT/A6



Gonzales wants House leftists labeled Reds

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Philip C. Tubeza

AND YOU THOUGHT THE Cold War was over. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales is proposing to "label" left-leaning party-list candi-



GONZALES/A6

Solon shot dead at church

Aide also killed in brazen attack in Mt. Carmel compound



THERE'S NO STOPPING CHRISTMAS at the Davao City town plaza all decked out in the glowing trappings of the season and swathed with the Davaoenos' sentiments for the country's most beloved feast. Nightly, residents congregate at the plaza to breathe in that spirit of peace and goodwill that only the day of the birth of Jesus Christ can inspire. DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER.MINDANAO

By Philip C. Tubeza
and Nancy C. Carvajal

ABRA REP. LUIS BERSAMIN Jr. and his police bodyguard were shot dead by two gunmen yesterday after the lawmaker attended a niece's wedding at Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City.

The 62-year-old Bersamin, a member of President Macapagal-Arroyo's party Kabalikatan ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampl), had just left the church on Doña Juana Rodriguez (formerly Broadway) Avenue and was walking back to his car when attacked.

Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, district director of the Quezon City Police, identified the bodyguard as Adelfo Ortega.

Gatdula said Bersamin was preparing to board his Ford E150 van when one of the gunmen shot his bodyguard behind him and then fired at the surprised lawmaker.

Both men were shot in the head and the back, Gatdula said.

The attack came in the wake of claims by officials of an alleged plot to assassinate Rep. Prospero Nograles, majority leader of the House of Representatives, and the narrow escape from a car bombing of another congressman, Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr.

Witnesses said the gunmen escaped on a red motorcycle. Gatdula said the getaway vehicle was found abandoned on Aurora Boulevard corner Balete

SOLON/A19

WHAT'S INSIDE

THANKSGIVING

32 fishermen stranded by "Seniang's" wrath rescued after six days at sea off Eastern Samar

ACROSS/A15

RANDY DAVID:

At the most visible level, this crisis manifests itself in the distrust of the Filipino people for nearly all their politicians regardless of where they stand on issues.

OPINION/A13

BLAME GAME

GMA's unpopularity doomed Cha-cha, says ex-chair of Constitutional Commission.

NEWS/A2

PUBLIC BEWARE

Primer on how to tell fake peso bills and coins.

TALK OF THE TOWN/A14

Malacañang: Don't grandstand at the grandstand

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Jerome Aning

DON'T GRANDSTAND AT THE grandstand—that was Malacañang's appeal yesterday on the eve of what could be the biggest protest rally under the rule of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Seeking to quell Palace anxieties, Roman Catholic Church or-

ganizers said today's planned massive rally at the Quirino Grandstand would be held "in an environment of prayer."

Today's assembly is scheduled to start at 2 p.m.

"We are expecting about half a million or thereabouts," CBCP spokesperson Msgr. Pedro Quitorio said.

He said marchers could carry

banners from their points of origin all the way to Taft Avenue.

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye aired an appeal "for calm and sobriety" during today's rally triggered by attempts by Ms Arroyo's allies in Congress to fast track changes in the Constitution.

"We ... urge all those who would participate in the prayer

rally to heed the call of the church leaders and not turn (it) into a political circus or a venue for grandstanding," Bunye said.

Malacañang and the House of Representatives had backed down from their move to convene a constituent assembly without the Senate and appeared puzzled why the organizers were still bent on pushing through with the ral-

ly. "Peace and unity are also the primordial concern of this administration and we are one with our religious leaders in bringing these aspirations into fruition," said Bunye.

Military and police forces have been placed on the highest state of alert.

MALACANANG/A19

'What-did-Eggie-tell-Letty?' contest: And the winners are . . .

By Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in chief

THE WINNING ANSWERS TO the Dare-to-Ask contest ending Nov. 30 evaluated by myself and the INQUIRER founding chair, Eugenia "Eggie" Duran-Apostol are the following: First prize, Ed Dames of Unit 3A Venida 1 Bldg, 120 Amorsolo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City. His entry was: "To be recognized for doing something you love doing is unbelievable."

Second prize goes to Ramon Arcenas of 1861 Sagu St., DVA, Makati City. His entry reads: "Can you imagine us and the Dalai Lama and Gandhi in the same list as Asian heroes. Who would have thought?"

The third prize is awarded to Imelda Nicolas of Unit 14 K, Amorsolo West Rockwell Center, Makati City. Her entry reads: "I was informed by Time our heroes' awards means we are to be shot at the Luneta, are you ready?"

There were several others that echoed the winners' entries notably that of Deagelia M. Pena, Ph.D whose entry was: "Heroes? We're just doing our job and en-

joying it immensely."

In such a case, Eggie and I considered the wording of the entry. Dames had the edge with the word "unbelievable." Which was exactly Eggie's and my sentiments about the Time awards.

We said to each other, Can you believe this?

In between breaks in the Time shoot, Eggie and I (we found out later) were thinking the same thing: This is unbelievable. "Who would have thought?" (from J. Ramon Arcenas) "Who would ever thought we would get this far (from Alain Joseph S. Craig of Unit 1221 Bldg, 12 Ph Guadalupe Bliss, JP Rizal, Cembo Makati City).

Now it can be told. Eggie wasn't telling me anything funny. She and I were into the third hour (past 11 p.m. on a grey November) of posing for the Time photographer, and we were clean out of humor.

I had put in a whole day's (and night's) work. Eggie had her regular frenzied dancing session with her amigas. At our age, we can no longer pull all-nighters.

By the way, the age factor dom-

WHAT DID/A6



MUCH-AWARDED the past 20 years, Cory Aquino was thrilled about this one: For the first time, all her 4 daughters—Viel, Kris, Babsy, Pinky—were present, an honor by itself, the proud mom told PDI. The People Power icon keynoted Time's 60 Asian heroes' award rites at HK's Ritz-Carlton.



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH 12/16/2006

Second FRONT PAGE

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Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Bagyo	Cloudy with Rains	Bohol	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Laag	Cloudy with Rains	Capayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

'Unpopular GMA may have lost Cha-cha'

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S UNPOPULARITY may have doomed the campaign for constitutional reforms, according to the political science professor who chaired the Constitutional Commission that drew up the draft of a new Constitution in 2005.

Dr. Jose Abueva, a former president of the University of the Philippines, said the culture of partisanship and the personalistic psychology of Filipinos may have set back the campaign for change as many tended to focus on the individuals promoting it, like the President, and "not on the substance" of Charter reform.

"Many people would rather focus on personalities. The President has 60 percent unpopularity and she is the symbol of Charter change," Abueva said.

"Charter change lost political support because of personalities, not on substance," he added.

Abueva, a member of the 1971 Constitutional Convention, made these comments after Malacañang virtually abandoned the campaign for constitutional reform, whether via a constituent assembly or constitutional convention route.

But Abueva said he was not disappointed by the Presi-

dent's decision to set aside Cha-cha amid the growing concern that it was dividing the country.

He said he admired both Ms Arroyo and House Speaker Jose de Venecia for taking up the responsibility to push for constitutional change despite strong resistance from influential sectors like the Church, the opposition and the media.

"What can you do versus public opinion when the media, especially the INQUIRER and ABS-CBN, [are] stressing the negatives of Charter change? When your editors are anti-Gloria, they are anti-Charter change," he said.

Another constitutionalist, this time from the group opposed to Charter change, said Ms Arroyo's decision to postpone it was an opportunity to undertake genuine political reforms, particularly in the electoral system.

"Let's hope this opportunity is not wasted," said lawyer Chris-



DR. ABUEVA

tian Monsod, one of the framers of the 1987 Constitution and former chair of the Commission on Elections.

He said Ms Arroyo was right when she said there would be a proper time and opportunity for Charter change when the Filipinos find it "needful."

"This means there should be massive public information on the proposed Charter changes. The surveys show people don't want to be rushed into things," said Monsod, a convener of the anti-Charter change group OneVoice.

Abueva said the Charter Change Advocacy Commission (AdCom), chaired by Lito Monico Lorenzana, did its job of promoting the substance of constitutional change across the country but was no match for the partisanship and focus on personalities rather than substance.

"You're either for or against Gloria. People are not interested in the substance of Cha-cha and prefer to focus on personalities," Abueva said.

"The real reason for the proposed changes are obscured and set aside because the focus is on [Ms Arroyo], the Garci tapes. We don't look forward to the future, not on system change. This is the kind of politics we want to change," he said.

Abueva said the President, De Venecia, the AdCom and the people's initiative groups like Sigaw ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines have nonetheless planted the seeds of Charter reform.

"Next year, we believe the people will again call for Charter

change even after the elections," he said.

"There will be no more excuses," he added.

Constitutional reforms are necessary, "objectively speaking," he said.

"It can be postponed but it can't be stopped," he added.

Monsod said the public opinion surveys that showed the public's distaste for Charter change and the threat of massive protests when the House tried to force constitutional changes were what influenced the administration's decision to shelve Cha-cha.

"Those who supported moves to change the Charter may have

waned in their support because of what they saw," he said.

Sigaw ng Bayan, the group that petitioned for a people's initiative that the Supreme Court rejected, has accepted that immediate constitutional reform no longer has the active support of Ms Arroyo and her allies in Congress, said the group's spokesperson Raul Lambino.

"We can't blame the President and other government officials for turning their backs on Charter change. They are politicians first and foremost and they are subject to pressure," he said.

Despite remarks, Japan confirms attendance at Asean meet next year

By Volt Contreras

JAPAN HAS CONFIRMED ITS ATTENDANCE at the rescheduled 12th Asean Summit in Cebu next month, despite earlier remarks made by its economic minister about the Philippines' diminished credibility over the postponement of the regional meet, an official privy to the summit preparations said yesterday.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will be at the meetings representing one of the six dialogue partners of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

But a formal announcement is being held pending similar confirmation from the other partner states, especially China and South Korea, said the official who said he lacked official clearance to speak on the matter. The other dialogue partners expected at the summit are India, Australia and New Zealand.

"Abe will proceed to Cebu right after his visit to Europe," the official added.

Despite the postponement of the Cebu meetings, Abe went ahead with a shortened visit to Manila and held bilateral talks with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

On Tuesday, reports quoted Japan's economic minister Akira Amari as having written in his

blog that the postponement of the Asean summit and the adjunct East Asia Summit ostensibly because of stormy weather "surely lowered the credibility of the Philippine government."

"Considering the size of the typhoon (Seniang) and that it passed by Sunday morning, the reason for the rescheduling was difficult to understand," Amari wrote.

"(Philippine) media have reported that the real reason might have been the warnings of a high possibility of terrorist attacks, revealed not only by Britain but also the United States immediately before the events," he wrote. "It is extremely dangerous in security terms for leaders from 16 nations to gather at a hotel on Cebu."

In reaction, summit spokesperson Vic Lecaros said Amari's statements should not be taken as the official stand of the Japanese government. He also ruled out the filing of any diplomatic protest over these unusually blunt remarks.

Summit organizing committee chair Marciano Paynor reported on Friday that the leaders of all the other nine Asean states had already confirmed they would be at the Cebu summit on Jan. 10-15.

Wire reports said Malaysia has lent a hand in urging Southeast Asian leaders and partners to attend the rescheduled Philippine-hosted summit.

Twist in 'Nicole' case: Gov't now taking Smith side in custody issue

By Volt Contreras

IN A CURIOUS LEGAL TWIST, Subic rape victim "Nicole" is now pitted against her former defender—the Philippine government—in a battle to keep her convicted rapist, US marine Daniel Smith, in a Philippine jail as well as to question the constitutionality of certain provisions in the US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement.

Nicole's private lawyer, Evalyn Ursua, yesterday said "Nicole" would file a motion on Monday to stop the Court of Appeals from deciding on the bid of Lance Corporal Smith to be transferred out of the Makati city jail and back to US custody pending the appeal of his Dec. 4 conviction.

Ursua said Nicole will point out that she had filed a petition questioning the constitutionality of some provisions of the VFA before the Supreme Court as early as June 16, 2006, and therefore "the CA should not preempt (the high court) on the matter."

On the other hand, Smith's transfer bid is being backed by Nicole's former lawyers from the Department of Justice, who agreed that Smith's transfer to the custody of the US Embassy was in line with the VFA.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has also warned that the decision of Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon to keep the US Marine at the Makati jail will have "tremendous repercussions" on our diplomatic relations with the United States.

In a 16-page petition-in-intervention filed Friday, the DFA warned that: "The government's adherence to its treaty commitments is truly imperative. Any act of derogation therefrom will markedly diminish our credibility as a member of the international community."

There is a provision in the VFA that states that accused visiting forces would stay under the custody of US authorities "until completion of judicial proceedings." The US and Philippine governments both agree that this means the convicted Smith can stay at the US Embassy until his appeals before the higher courts are heard.

On Dec. 13, or 10 days after convicting Smith, Pozon denied for lack of merit Smith's bid to be returned to US custody. According to the Makati judge's interpretation of the VFA, US custody of Smith was "terminated after the completion of the trial and rendition of judgment of conviction."

The US Embassy said Pozon's ruling "reflects a misunderstanding of Philippine obligations under the terms of the VFA during judicial proceedings." US President George W. Bush himself has expressed his concern on the matter.

Meanwhile, the 21-year-old Smith remains at the Makati city jail but not inside a cell. He has been given his own space at the jail's records section, where he is being guarded day and night by US security personnel.



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Typhoon victims' lives slowly returning to normal, says DSWD

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE VICTIMS OF recent Typhoon "Seniang" were slowly getting their lives back to normal, as only 61 of the 166 evacuation centers remained open, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said yesterday.

Cabral said only 3,844 families, or 18,897 persons, were still at the evacuation centers, down from the 11,655 families, or 58,126 persons, who had sought shelter at the height of Seniang.

"The decongestion of evacuation centers shows the situation is going back to normal and the victims are slowly recovering. Our goal is to immediately close all evacuation centers," Cabral said.

She said relief operations were still going on for the nearly 800,000 persons, or 155,643 families, displaced by the typhoon.

She said that as of Dec. 14, P2 million worth of relief assistance had been released to the affected areas from the combined resources of the Department of Social Work and Development, which provided P1.1 million; the local government units concerned, which released P881,000, and nongovernment organizations which gave P10,000.

DSWD field reports indicated 19 persons were killed, 26 were injured and six were still missing as a result of Seniang.

Reports also said

36,542 houses were damaged—9,439 of which were totally destroyed and 27,103 partially damaged.

The provinces of Capiz and Aklan in Region VI suffered the most number of damaged houses at 11,000, the

reports said.

Cabral said the DSWD's Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Infor-

mation Center at its central office in Quezon City was closely coordinating with its regional offices on

the extent of the damage caused by the typhoon and to identify the needs of the displaced families.

Donations for the victims are still being accepted at the National Resource Operations Center in Pasay

City (tel. 8528081 or 0919-8239222); at the DSWD in Batasan Hills (tel. 9517117); the DSWD-National

Capital Region at Legarda, Manila (tel. 7344116), and all Petron gas stations. With a Reuters report

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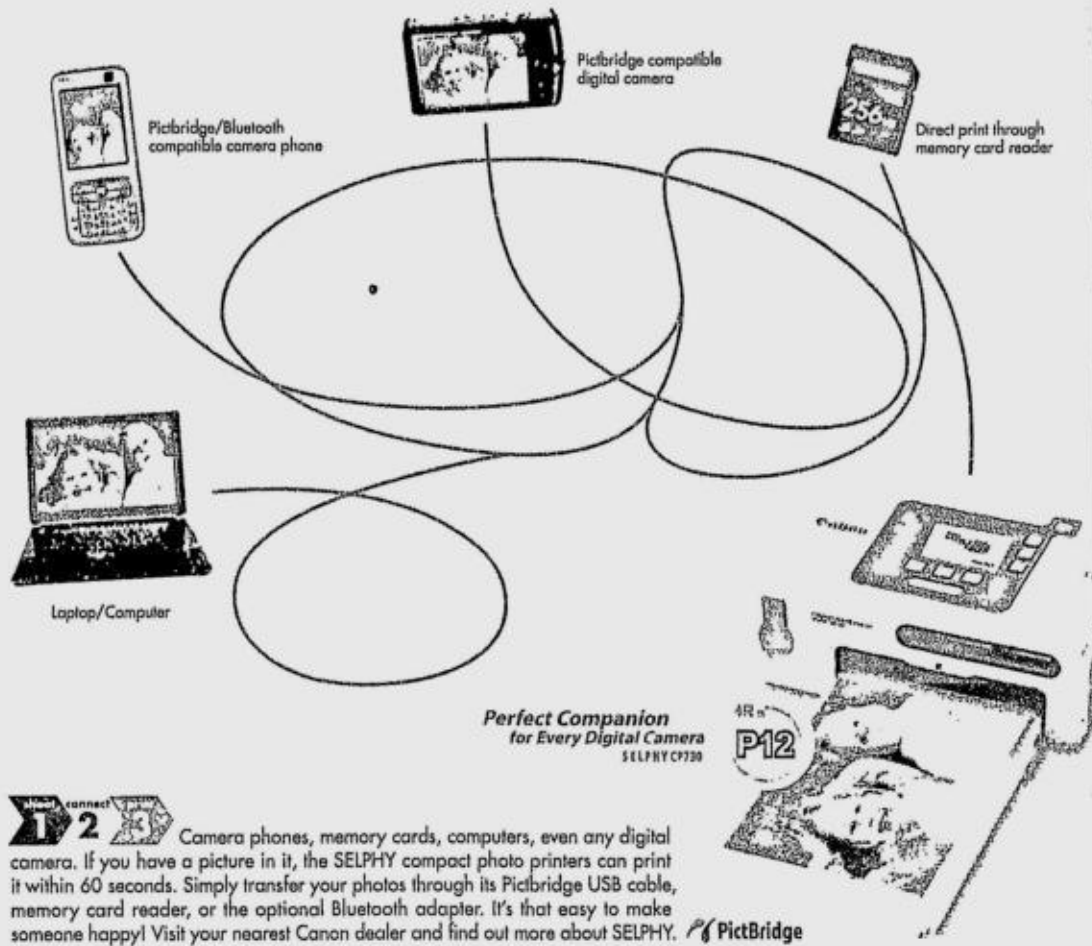
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More steel spans built, says DILG

By Norman Bordadora

A TOTAL OF 217 PREFABRICATED steel bridges under a presidential project being implemented by the Department of the Interior and Local Government have so far been completed, according to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

"This is in line with the continuing government initiative to provide easy access to goods and services for people living in remote barangays," said Puno.

Puno said that 56 more bridges under the President's Bridge Program (PBP) with a funding of P4.45 billion were to be constructed soon. The program is being implemented with financial aid from the Austrian government.

The program, which covers 12,025 linear meters of bridges, is expected to develop and enhance the capability of local government units (LGUs) in planning, designing and installing steel bridges.

The PBP also includes transferring the

technology of constructing steel bridges by tapping locally available labor and enlisting the participation of local officials in the program, according to Puno.

The LGUs provided counterpart funding for the project totaling P1.072 billion with another P281.5 coming from the national government.

"Now on its second phase, this project aims to provide all-weather access to the country's remote barangay using prefabricated modular steel bridges designed

for heavy truck loads," Puno said.

The secretary said all bridge components were manufactured from high-quality steel and fully galvanized iron and conformed to internationally recognized standards.

LGUs undertake almost all aspects of the construction, from the detailed engineering, construction of substructures and approaches, installation of the superstructures and hauling of the materials, to the acquisition of the right-of-way.

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Who is telling the truth?

A Report by the House Majority Rainbow Coalition

How we are to change the 1987 Constitution is an important question. But how we do it is *not* half as important an issue as that of simply getting the job done.

We in the Majority Rainbow Coalition of the House of Representatives cannot deny the urgency

of our country's need for a new beginning.

At a caucus last Monday, December 11, we decided to continue—with deliberate speed—the campaign for Charter Change that will enable our nation to modernize and match East Asia's economic tigers in prosperity and stability.

1 The Majority Coalition's overwhelming decision is to call for a *Constitutional Convention*, whose delegates would be elected simultaneously with national and local officials on May 14, 2007. On December 14, the House approved a motion to archive Resolution 197, killing the initiative to convene a Constituent Assembly of Congress.

2 The Majority Coalition remains deeply sensitive to public opinion. By calling for a Constitutional Convention, we responded positively to appeals of the Catholic Bishops led by Archbishop Angelo Lagdameo, the Iglesia ni Kristo of Executive Minister Erano Manalo, the El Shaddai charismatic movement of Bro. Mike Velarde, the Jesus Is Lord movement of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, and the Baptist churches under Bishop Benny Abante as well as major business and civic groups.

3 The Senate has declared repeatedly over these past two years that it will agree to nothing less than a Constitutional Convention—and not the Constituent Assembly favored by the House—to amend the 1987 Charter. Because time is vital and we can no longer deny the urgency of constitutional reform, the Majority Rainbow Coalition has taken a deliberate and difficult step—approved overwhelmingly in caucus—in favor of a Constitutional Convention. We ask the Senate to muster immediately the constitutional requirement of two-thirds vote of its members to call for the election of a Constitutional Convention—if it is sincere with its pronouncements. It now turns out that the Senate is against it. So who is speaking the truth on Charter change?

4 We continue to believe that a Constituent Assembly is the simplest, most effective, and fastest way of managing Charter reform. But because the Con-Con is favored by our top religious leaders, we pursued this option, though it will cost anywhere from P7-P10 billion.

The Majority Coalition remains consistently focused on pushing for Charter change because our country must complete its modernization in the next few years—or forever remain a backwater of East Asia. We need to lift the protectionist provision, to open the economy to foreign direct investment that will set up hundreds of factories to provide tens of thousands of jobs and raise the incomes of urban and rural Filipino workers.

5 With the unicameral parliamentary government we seek (to replace the presidential system), we want to put an end to our democracy of deadlock; continued fighting between Malacañang and the Senate; continuing conflict between the Senate and the House; repeated impeachment, coup and destabilization attempts; and poisonous and destructive politics that have kept our people poor and our economy lagging behind the East Asian economic tigers.

The House has consistently outperformed the Senate in legislation. It initiated landmark bills deemed vital to national survival and stability—the monumental EVAT law being a recent example. It is hailed by the international community as the savior of the economy, yet which activists protesting it burned President Arroyo's effigy ten times and Speaker de Venecia's effigy seven times. As of last October, the House already approved on third reading a total of 1,013 bills (29 of which have become law). Of these bills—many of local application and hence anticipated by ordinary Filipinos in our districts—993 remain stranded in the Senate. The continuing conflict between these chambers—not to mention the monumental wastage of time and resources—are compelling arguments for a shift to a unicameral parliamentary government.

6 Our parliamentary government can be built on the model of successful parliamentary systems in Europe (such as those of England, Germany, Spain, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland which have attracted our professionally skilled OCWs), Australia and New Zealand, and in Asia's most prosperous states: Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and India. Eventually we propose a federal system similar to that of the United States.

7 Despite unfair criticism, the House has kept its focus on other major and urgent concerns while discussing Charter reform in earnest. As Bicol lay in the typhoon's ruins, Speaker Jose de Venecia and the Bicol representatives—Joey Salceda, Luis Villafuerte, Edcel Lagman and their 96 other colleagues from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—raised P250,000 from each to create an immediate relief fund of P25-million for the typhoon-ravaged areas. Mrs. Gina de Venecia and the congressional spouses sent ten truckloads of relief goods.

The P25-million and the immediate efforts are modest, but they were unmatched by any local group is contribution.

8 The House approved the 2007 National Budget as early as October. We now ask the bicameral committee led by Sen. Franklin Drilon and Rep. Joey Salceda to reconcile the Senate and House versions and have the Budget measure ratified by both chambers before the Christmas break.

9 Speaker de Venecia and Rep. Salceda, backed by Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Jr., are also set to sponsor any day now the P12-billion fund to rebuild and rehabilitate the typhoon-damaged Bicol (Region 5) and certain areas of Regions 3 and 4. The fund will be financed by budgetary realignments, global grants, official development assistance, and concessional loans to be extended to the provinces, cities, towns, and barangays of the affected areas. President Macapagal-Arroyo supports this initiative and has already released P3 billion for typhoon-ravaged areas.

10 In the early 1990s a similar fund—the P10-billion fund—sponsored by then Reps. de Venecia and Rolando Andaya Sr. was key to the successful rebuilding and rehabilitation of earthquake-damaged Dagupan City, Baguio City, La Union and parts of Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija. Still another fund initiated by de Venecia—and supported by then Sen. Macapagal-Arroyo—was the P10-billion fund, which successfully rehabilitated Pampanga, Zambales, Tarlac and Bataan from the destruction wrought by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

WE BELIEVE:

The struggle for Charter reform is hard, but we cannot slacken. It is really about enabling everyday Filipinos to have a say in how national society is ordered, for what purposes, and for whose benefit.

Charter change will compel our politicians to stop depending on sheer popularity to win elections. And it will require our political parties to propose alternative policies and set national goals.

We must restore to our people the hope that tomorrow will be better, and that hope is to be found—not in some foreign land, among some alien people—but here at home, in the land of our forefathers.

Pimentel: Look into Naia 3 angle in killing of gov't lawyer

By Philip C. Tubeza

ASSISTANT SOLICITOR GENERAL NESTOR Ballacillo might have been murdered because of his persistence in digging into the alleged irregularities behind the construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

Pimentel said law enforcers should look at this angle amid the frustration of the victims' family and the public over the lack of progress in the police investigation of the slaying of Ballacillo, 57, and his son, Benedict Paul, 22, a week ago.

"There are theories that say that Ballacillo was killed because he was assigned to track down the anomalous circumstances that seemed to shroud the building of the Naia Terminal 3," Pimentel said.

Ballacillo was the lawyer of the government in the arbitration cases filed by the contractor, Philippine International Air Terminals Company (Piatco), and its foreign partner, Fraport of Germany, with the International Chamber of Commerce in Singapore and with the International Center for the Settlement of Industrial Disputes in Washington D. C.

At the time of his death, he was also representing the government in the Piatco-Naia 3 case before the Pasay City Regional Trial Court, which was in the process of determining just and fair compensation for the terminal that Piatco built.

Pimentel recalled that the late Judge Henrik Gingoyon of the same Pasay RTC was killed several months ago after ruling in favor of the government's bid to expropriate the modern aviation terminal.

Pimentel said government investigators should also look into the possible involvement of drug traffickers in the double murder case.

He said he received information that Ballacillo was assigned to investigate some drug cases involving powerful people in the government.

"No matter what the motive was in the killings of the assistant solicitor general and his son, we condemn their murders and call on the investigative agencies of government to act swiftly to look for, arrest, prosecute and punish the gunmen and the mastermind or masterminds who were responsible for the utterly shocking crime," he said.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 17, 2006

3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-18

The Lord is here

Cry out with joy, O daughter of Zion; rejoice, O people of Israel! Sing joyfully with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

Yahweh has lifted your sentence and has driven your enemies away. Yahweh, the King of Israel is with you; do not fear any misfortune.

On that day they will say to Jerusalem: Do not be afraid nor let your hands tremble, for Yahweh your God is within you, Yahweh, saving warrior. He will jump for joy on seeing you, for he has revived his love. For you he will cry out with joy, as you do in the days of the Feast.

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

The Lord is near

Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again: rejoice and may everyone experience your gentle and understanding heart. The Lord is near: do not be anxious about anything. In everything resort to prayer and supplication together with thanksgiving and bring your requests before God. Then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18

The one to come

The people asked John, "What are we to do?" And John answered, "If you have two coats, give one to the person who has none; and if you have food, do the same."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and asked him, "Master, what must we do?" John said to them, "Collect no more than your fixed rate." People serving as soldiers asked John, "What about us? What are we to do?" And he answered, "Don't take anything by force or threaten the people by denouncing them falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were wondering about John's identity, "Could he be the Messiah?" Then John answered them, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more: He will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire. As for me, I am not worthy to untie his sandal. He comes with a winnowing fan to clear his threshing floor and gather the grain into his barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

With these and many other words John announced the Good News to the people.

Commentary

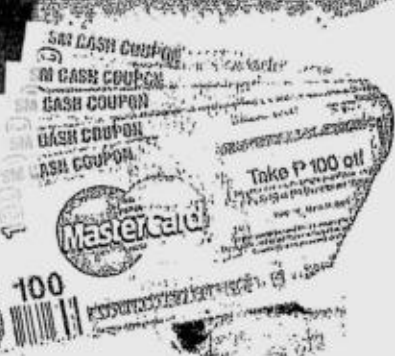
Rejoice, shout, sing, be glad, and exult! We are released from judgment and God is in our midst. There is no reason to be discouraged. Our God is renewing us in love and singing over us! Can you hear? Rejoice! We are to share generously, trust, pray for others, and live in gratitude for God's peace stands guard over us. What are we supposed to do? Share food, clothing, shelter. Stop being greedy and stop stealing from others. Do no harm, no violence, no lying.

Are we changing? Are we living with anticipation, our hearts wondering? And this is only preparation, water washing out our eyes. The Good News is yet to come!

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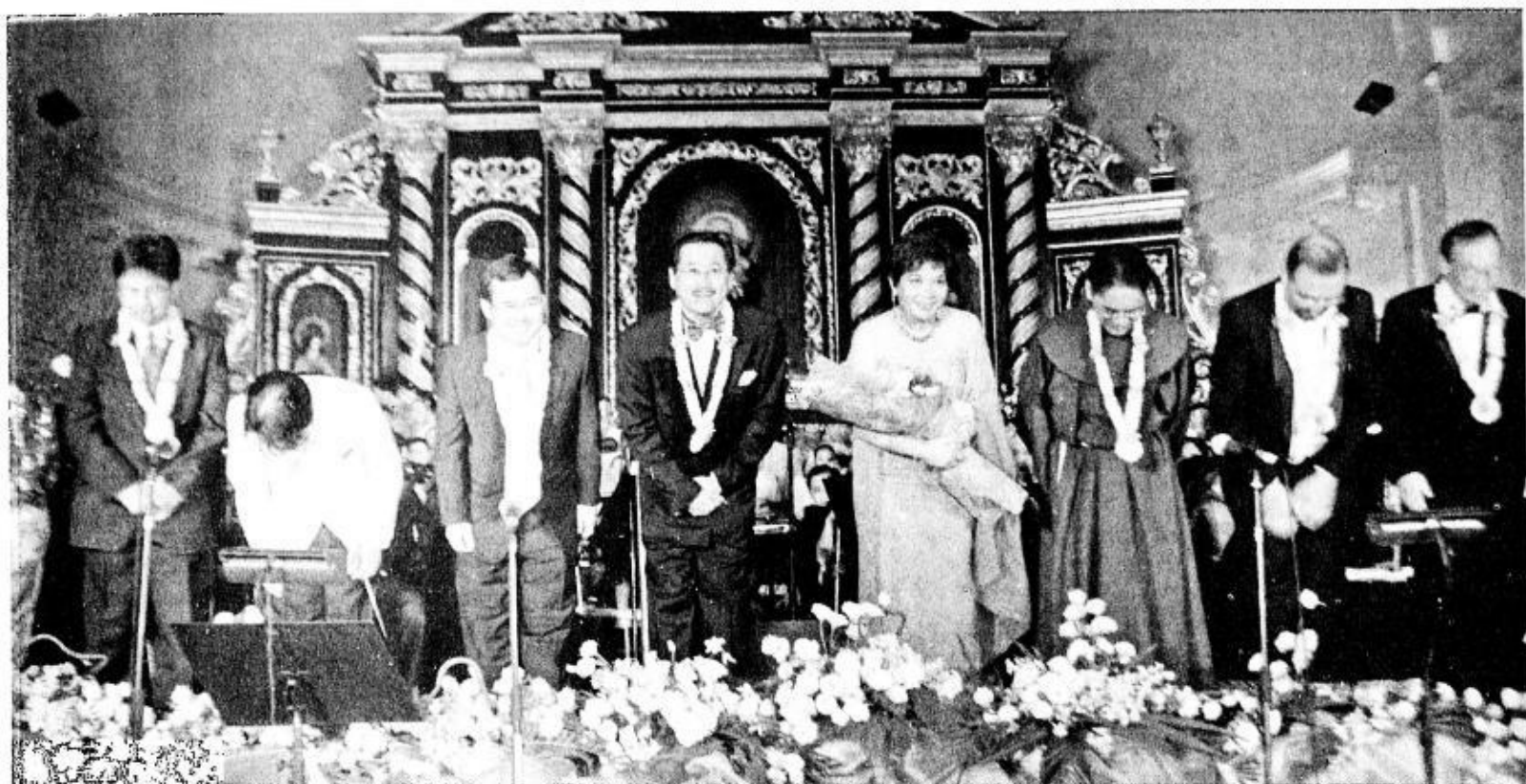


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TAKE A BOW. Bravo to (from left), organist Alejandro Consolacion II, Rodol Colmenar, conductor; Simon R. Paterno of Credit Suisse, Eduardo H. Yap, chair, Adeste Fideles organizing committee; Evelyn Singson, president of the Management Association of the Philippines; Fr. Antonio Ma. Rosales OFM, Otoniel Gonzaga, tenor, and George Yang.

ADESTE FIDELES

Carolling for Sorsogon typhoon victims

By Fe Zamora

WITH THE AWESOME BAROQUE *retablo* of the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park as backdrop, world-acclaimed Filipino tenor Otoniel Gonzaga led the country's top classical singers and award-winning choirs in a carolling for the benefit of typhoon victims in Sorsogon.

Thursday night's concert in a church ushered in the Christmas season and organizers hoped that holding concerts in churches, a tradition in other Roman Catholic countries, would become part of the Philippines' own Christmas tradition.

Gonzaga's powerful rendition of the well-loved *Adeste Fideles* Christmas carol had the jam-packed Santuario audience spellbound, setting the mood for compelling sopranos Rachel Gerodias, Camille Lopez, Karla Gutierrez and tenors George Yang and Frankie Aseniero Jr.

The celebrated Gerodias swept the audience with her "Joy to the World." She was delightful in a lively trio with Lopez and Gutierrez in the popular "Twelve Days of Christmas."

Rodol Colmenar masterfully conducted the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, all vocalists and choir groups in an explosion of pure music in Handel's grand Hallelujah Chorus.

Santuario's resident organist Alejandro Consolacion II, who had a command performance before Queen Sofia of Spain, played the organ.

Christmas for children, childlike

But it was the playful interpretation of the song "Do You Hear What I Hear?" by the Mandaluyong Youth Choir and the Chiang Kai Shek College Youth Choir that reminded the audience that indeed, Christmas is for the children and the childlike.

"If it's for a good cause, people will

come," Evelyn Singson, president of the Management Association of the Philippines, said after the sold-out concert.

Dubbed *Adeste Fideles*, the concert was sponsored by the MAP and the Santuario de San Antonio, with Credit Suisse as co-presenter, and held for the benefit of the victims of Typhoon "Milenyo" in Sorsogon and the MAP's Management Educator's Workshop.

How idea was born

The idea of holding a concert in a church came from businessman and music lover Eduardo Yap, chair of the *Adeste Fideles* organizing committee.

Yap was backed by an advisory committee headed by Rafael Hechanova with Santuario parish priest Fr. Antonio Ma. Rosales, Marixi Prieto and Jose Mari Chan as members.

Yap said holding concerts in a church had become a tradition in many Roman

Catholic countries.

Enriching Philippine tradition

"Hopefully, this concert will become a local tradition during Advent and add to our other cherished church-based Christmas celebrations, like the *Simbang Gabi*," he said.

The planning of a concert in a church started in June, with Yap choosing a repertoire of Christmas carols and finding the right singers to interpret the selected songs.

"It was not so difficult, except for Gonzaga who had a tight schedule," Yap told the *INQUIRER*.

The 24-song concert also featured the Coro de San Antonio, conducted by Amelita Dayrit-Guevarra, and Coro Tomasino, conducted by Ronan Ferrer.

The youth choirs from Chiang Kai Shek College and Mandaluyong City were conducted by Irma Tan-Su and Sebastian Trinidad, respectively.

Gonzales ...

From page A1

dates as communists to caution voters, particularly soldiers and policemen, against voting what he calls democracy's enemies into the halls of Congress.

In an interview with state-run dzRB radio yesterday, Gonzales said: "There will be plenty who will run in the party-lists in the coming elections and we have to describe them all. As national security adviser, it is important [for me] to show soldiers and police what groups are being used by the communists to continue their bad intentions on the public."

He proposed that an independent group be formed to give a "neutral description of each political party."

Gonzales was adamant about labeling the political parties for the benefit of the soldiers. "There should be no partisan politics inside the Armed Forces. As a citizen of the republic, they should focus on choosing what is right in the coming elections."

Left gaining seats

He noted how the left-leaning groups have been getting more seats in the House of Representatives since 1998 when sectoral representatives were voted into office rather than appointed by the President.

Based on data culled by *INQUIRER* Research, only two of the 13 party-list representatives that won in 1998 were leftist (Sanlakas and Akbayan). In the 2001 polls, seven out of 20 party-list winners were left of center. Their number increased further in the 2001 elections when 10 of the 24 party-list members were leftists. Congress can have up to 50 sectoral representatives as party-list members because a representative can sit in the House of Representatives by garnering at least two percent of the votes cast.

"My only interest is that communists should not be allowed to enter Congress because a big accident will happen to our democracy. They do not believe in democracy; they look at the weaknesses of our democracy and [use them] to strengthen their rebellion. That is wrong," Gonzales said.

'We have to be vigilant'

In Kidapawan City, Gonzales warned on Friday of the possibility of a communist takeover in government if people would continue "to support its fronts now operating in various forms and disguises."

"We have to be vigilant if we don't want a communist takeover," he said during the provincial peace and order meeting chaired by North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol.

Although Gonzales did not say which groups were fronting for the communists, authorities had earlier named Bayan Muna, Kilusang Mayo Uno and other militant groups as the legal arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Officials of the said groups, who are often referred to as militants, denied any ties with the underground communists.

Prayer rally

Gonzales said the current political situation was being taken advantage of by the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the CPP, with the help of leftist organizations and militant groups.

Gonzales said the threat of a communist takeover was also bolstered by the support of rogue members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the terror group Jemaah Islamiya.

He said people should be vigilant and authorities should be on maximum alert for today's prayer rally, which was being spearheaded by the Catholic Church.

Getting senile?

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran yesterday scored Gonzales for warning that leftist provocateurs were out to sabotage today's anti-Charter change rally at the Rizal Park.

He said Gonzales' allegation was unsubstantiated and pointed out that progressive groups were also expected to join the rally, which was organized by the Catholic Church.

"Norberto Gonzales must be getting senile. Can't he think of anything new to say? He's getting paid to be national security adviser, but he keeps recycling old reports that have never been substantiated," Beltran said.

"He doesn't even have the imagination to think of new allegations or the creativity to come up with something more plausible. The only violence that could happen [today] could only come from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the mercenary groups it works with," he added.

The lawmaker said the Arroyo administration was "the one with a deadly allergy to street protests and mass gatherings, especially to those with the potential to develop into a political uprising."

Beltran said today's prayer rally "is a testament to the potency of collective action."

He said that even if the activity was packaged as one of thanksgiving for the defeat of the constituent assembly, it still sent shivers down the spine of the "administration, hence Gonzales' bogus security reading."

Insecure administration

"Malacañang and its allies try to dismiss the prayer rally as somewhat inconsequential, but at the same time it can't help but make a big deal out of it by drumbeating scenarios of violence and chaos. These are definite signs of a highly insecure administration," Beltran said.

He said that members of militant people's organizations and progressive party-lists Anakpawis, Bayan Muna and Gabriela Women's Party would come in full force to attend and support the prayer rally. *With Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

She thought ... 'What-did-Eggie-tell-Letty?' ...

From page A1

informing her that she had won a million pesos. "But I ignored the calls," she said in an interview during the award ceremonies at the PhilWeb office, promo partner of the BIR and Pagcor.

Premyo Sa Resibo is a nationwide text raffle started by the BIR and Pagcor with the objective of motivating consumers to always ask for a receipt whenever they purchase goods or services.

The program will help boost the tax collection drive campaign of the BIR in plugging billions of pesos in tax leaks due to non-issuance of receipts and misdeclaration of sales.

Consumers simply text in their receipt numbers and they are given raffle numbers which are entered into a monthly raffle. The program, which started in June 2006, has already given out P23 million in prizes.

Dolor attributed her hesitation to her fear of scams and hoaxes. Because of this, the 25-year-old resident of Ilocos Sur almost forfeited her P1-million prize.

Based on the promo rules, winners who fail to claim their money 60 days after a draw date automatically forfeit the prize.

"Actually, I could have just checked the Premyo Sa Resibo website (www.premyosaresibo.com.ph) or called their help line at 338-9777. I would have gotten all the info I needed," she said, on hindsight.

Fate, however, was smiling on the young woman. A few days before the end of the 60-day period, a distant relative who worked for the BIR dropped by Dolor's house and told her about her windfall.

Dolor immediately sent word to PhilWeb, the BIR and Pagcor, and prepared for her eight-hour trip to Metro Manila.

"It's surreal," she said. "Every day I hear about people winning the lottery, the sweepstakes, raffles at malls, but I've never met any of them. Now that I've won, I believe."

Grand prize draw

The Premyo Sa Resibo Grand Christmas Draw is on Dec. 20 where another P12 million in prizes will be given out bringing the total cash payout for 2006 to a whopping P35 million. Winners are given 60 days to claim their prizes.

Dolor said she would invest her prize money in a small business, if not in Ilocos Sur, then surely in her parent's hometown of San Fernando, La Union.

"Since I'm jobless now, I might as well start a small business with the money. The timing couldn't be more perfect," she said.

Dolor's advice to aspiring winners? Temper caution with optimism.

"My hesitation almost cost me a million pesos. I should have at least tried to check if I had won, but I didn't. I was fortunate someone went out of her way to inform me," she said.

Joining Premyo Sa Resibo is easy. For details, text PSR HELP to 9777 or call Tel. No. 338-9777.

From page A1

inated the entries. "By saying we're Asia's heroes over the last 60 years, they're betraying our ages," was the entry of Leonardo Canta of Bacoor, Cavite.

Another from Marissa Nicolas goes: "Did you know that to be included among Asia's heroes over the last 60 years, you should look over 60? Ouch! From Rick Olivares: "Is this award for Asian heroes over the last 60 years or for those over 60?"

From Aida Mojica: *Talagang matanda na tayo* (we're really old) after 60 years of working.

If so, it means that direct from my mother's pure, clean, peaceful womb, I went straight to the hurly-burly, often sordid world of journalism.

Let me clarify, guys.

For the record the 60 in Time's Asian heroes refer to the number of years that the world's first news-magazine began publishing in Asia. For the record, its parent Time was co-founded in 1923 in the United States by Briton Hadden and Henry Luce.

The awardees don't have to be 60. Or look 60. Which is not saying I'm not. This is just to stress that you don't have to have lived six decades to be considered finally heroic.

For instance, Kang Chol Hwan, a survivor of North Korea's prison camp, who defected to South Korea to expose the horrors of Kim Jong Il's regime is only 38.

As for Eggie, she will have to speak

for herself.

Somewhat risque

There were as well many entries that were somewhat off-color. Like Rebecca C. Patrimonio: "Hey, look Letty—ka guapo naman (he's good-looking) this photographer. But oh, oh, does he know his fly is open?"

Another from Dani Rogan A. Garduque: "Do you see what I see? Look at the guy taking our picture, his zipper is widely open."

You get the drift?

The Time photographer was an okay guy, real easy on the eye. Eggie and I noted he appeared to be losing weight right before our eyes (The strenuous shooting, not his first for the day, was getting to him, too, no doubt). He kept pulling up his pants. Eggie and I exchanged knowing glances. We kept an eye not on any zipper, but for the Big Reveal.

Thanking Marcos

Entries (at least three) from Leonardo Canta of Block 10, Lot 83, Camella, Sorrento, Bacoor, Cavite, suggested: "We should thank Marcos, he made us heroes." Sure.

A hint that makes sense: Eggie was telling me that, "I spoke to Isagani [Yambot, publisher] about the citation and he agrees you simply deserve a decent raise. Indecent is fine with me, too. Thanks for that entry, Aida del Rosario.

Words from the wise

Michael Laxsamana-Ricafort read my mind: "Why only us? How about

the countless others who silently fought for the country's freedom and made this country free?" It's been top of mind—Eggie's and I—since Time discovered our so-called heroic qualities.

If I were asked about my own Filipino hero for the last 60 years, I would say the Filipino soldier whose bravery, Churchill had described as "second to none."

Rime and reason

I like the rhythmic reasoning of Dolores Mercado: "Select the best, forget the rest, the Philippine Daily Inquirer brand of journalism is everybody's choice."

From Corazon Cordenillo comes an Oprah-ish reminder that we can't have enough of: "We both worked hard and succeeded. But where in the world does success come before work?"

In all the above, I tried to give you a sense of the contents of the nearly 2,000 entries. That's about all of it. Congratulations to all participants who sent in their entries by e-mail, snail mail and text.

Thank you for being a good sport, for humoring us, for being part of us. That's what the *INQUIRER* is all about.

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THE WORLD'S FIRST GREEN CHURCH is launched at the Smokey Mountain in Tondo during the start of the nine dawn Masses that lead up to Christmas Eve.

REM ZAMORA

For once, Senate, House agree on something: English as medium of instruction

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE THEY MAY NOT SEE EYE TO EYE ON most issues these days, the Senate and House are apparently agreed on one thing—the need to return English as the medium of instruction in Philippine schools.

House Deputy Majority Leader Eduardo Gullas yesterday said he had been assured by key senators that they would work for Senate approval of two House education bills, the first which would reinstate English as a teaching language, and the second, which would decentralize the massive payroll services of the Department of Education.

"We've already talked to Senate President Manny Villar, Senate President Pro-Tempore Juan Flavio and Senators Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson, and they are all absolutely supportive of both House-approved bills," said Gullas, an educator who authored the two bills.

Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, the wife of the Senate President, is a coauthor of one of the education bills.

House Bill No. 4701 seeks to revive English as the medium of instruction in all school levels, doing away with the bilingual language policy.

Payroll decentralization

HB 5579, meanwhile, proposes to break up the DepEd's huge payroll section into regional units to speed up the processing of the paychecks of the country's 505,150 public schoolteachers.

The House passed the two bills on third and final reading in September. Both measures have been awaiting Senate action.

"Our senators are definitely very encouraging. No less than the Senate President is committed to passing both bills. We are thus wholly confident they will approve the twin measures shortly," said Gullas.

He said the progress of the two bills in the Senate was stalled by the reorganization of the Senate's education committee.

Flavio gave up his work as Senate education committee chair to concentrate on his job as Senate President Pro-Tempore. The committee's work is now being handled by two subcommittees chaired by Angara and Lacson.

The Cebu lawmaker noted that while most Filipinos were convinced that English mastery led to improved job opportunities, national proficiency in the language had declined by 10 percentage points in the past 12 years, as shown in a March 2006 Social Weather Stations survey.

English competency

The survey showed that only two of three Filipino adults, or 65 percent, understood spoken and written English. Some 14 percent said they were not competent at all in spoken and written English, Gullas said.

In the December 1993 and September 2000 SWS surveys, three out of four Filipino adults, or 75 percent, said they understood spoken and written English. Only seven percent said they were not competent at all in spoken and written English, he said.

Gullas said the results of this year's National Achievement Test also showed that fourth-year high school and Grade 6 students received mean percentage scores of only 47.73 percent and 54.05 percent, respectively, in English.

In the payroll decentralization plan proposed under HB 5579, payroll services units are to be established in every DepEd regional office, except Metro Manila, Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon, and Mindoro Occidental-Mindoro Oriental-Marinduque-Romblon-Palawan.



TANDJUNG



MRS. TANDJUNG

Envoy's ladies mark Christmas

ALL AMBASSADOR LADIES ARE ENJOINED to grace the All Nations Women's Group Christmas party on Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. at the home of Indonesian Ambassador and Mrs. Irzan Tandjung in North Forbes Park, Makati City.

Mrs. Juliana Carolina Tandjung will deliver the welcome remarks while Ambassador Tandjung himself will deliver the keynote address. They will be introduced by ANWG president Cristina Caedo in the affair chaired by Lolita Escobar Mirpuri.

The Indonesian Choral Group will render musical numbers while folk dances will be performed by the Ramon Magsaysay High School Dance Troupe. All ANWG scholars, members and friends have been invited.

Highlight of the affair will be a mini fashion show featuring the Indonesian ladies in their costumes as well as the other ANWG women in theirs.

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PAMASKONG HANDOG 2006



Timely Pamaskong handog to the new Filipino heroes

The essence of a true Filipino Christmas will be experienced in full by the Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs) and their families as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the agency tasked to look after the interests of OFWs, presents "Pamaskong Handog"

"PAMASKONG HANDOG" FOR THE OFWs and their families is a package of programs and services that form part of the Christmas gifts of the agency for the OFWs and their families coming from various worksites overseas, all over the country, and from all walks of life. The Christmas Package includes "Pamaskong Salubong," "Family Day," "MOFYA," or Model OFW Family Award, "OWWAish," and "Special Activities."

With the theme "Pistang Pasko sa Pamilyang OFW," OWWA's Pamaskong Handog hopes to inculcate in the OFW communities the positive values of family orientation and social consciousness. The project, which recognizes the contributions of the OFWs to national development, also extends a helping hand to those who have less in life.

Launched in NAIA on December 15, Pamaskong Salubong operations will be undertaken in NAIA and in the regions with international airports, Cebu, Davao and Clark. The highlights of Pamaskong Salubong will be the Presidential Welcome and the awarding of prizes to lucky OFWs.

The Presidential Welcome scheduled in NAIA on December 21 will have President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro as special guests.

Under "Pamaskong Handog," lucky OFWs will be chosen every day starting on the program launching day to the Presidential Welcome Day. Three tricycle units, one passenger jeepney, and one TV set are to be raffled off.

Part too of the project is the installation of a waiting lounge for Filipino well-wishers at the parking area at NAIA. The waiting lounge is equipped with TV-video facilities that will show Filipino movies to make well-wishers while away the time while waiting for the flight arrival of the OFWs. The waiting area will also serve as venue for other entertainment programs that can be organized by project sponsors for the well-wishers. Free-flowing coffee and mineral water is also available in the area.

Institutional giveaways will also be given to the well-wishers or the arriving/vacation-

ing OFWs.

to ensure facilitative processing of the arrival documents and luggage of vacationing/returning OFWs, OWWA will renew its institutional linkage with Bureau of Customs and Immigration.

In connection with the Pamaskong Handog project of OWWA, the regional offices will celebrate the annual Family Day for vacationing OFWs and their families. While affording the OFWs a festive homecoming, the Family Day will also be an opportunity for the OFWs to share information about their working condition and the condition of the Filipino communities in their respective job sites.

The OFWs to be chosen for the Salubong and Family participants are the Filcom leaders or active partners of OWWA in the posts to facilitate coordination and support to OWWA's activities in the country. It is also a way for OWWA to acknowledge the contributions and support of the FILCOM leaders or partners to its on-site operations.

With the theme of "Fiesta Extravaganza," the Family Day will give out "Excellence Awards" to OWWA scholars. Likewise, posthumous awards will also be awarded to the deceased leaders of FILCOM and Family Circles. Recognition awards will also be awarded to OWWA institutional partners including FILCOM leaders who already went home for good.

OWWA has conducted a search for the OFW who will receive the Model OFW Family Award. OWWAish beneficiaries will come from the poorest of the poor who will be receiving prizes that they can use for income generating activities.



Through Pamaskong Handog, OWWA hopes to inculcate in the OFW communities the positive values of family orientation and social consciousness. The project also recognizes the contributions of the OFWs to national development.

Paying tribute to overseas Filipino workers

EMPHASIZING ITS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT to the welfare of the Philippines' modern-day heroes, the government led by the Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA) recognizes the contributions made by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the country's economy.

For many years, during this time of the year, OFWs come to the rescue with their remittances thus strengthening the hold of the economy to overcome global or regional crisis.

With this in mind, OWWA recognizes their efforts to give their families a better life as well as the important role they play in our nation.

With the annual Pamaskong Handog sa OFWs, the leading government agency tasked to ensure the welfare of Filipinos overseas comes up with activities that will encourage and motivate them in life. It is the government's way of thanking and paying tribute to the OFWs.

The Christmas activities, with the theme "Pistang Pasko sa Pamilyang OFW," hopes to inculcate in the OFW communities the positive values of family orientation and social consciousness.

The event started with the awarding of Model Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW)

Family of the Year Award (MOFYA). This year three finalists are given recognition for their and their families' efforts in managing the effect of overseas employment in family life. Families from Regions IV-A, VI, and IX were chosen from among the 17 finalists for their exemplary accomplishments as OFWs.

Vice President Noli de Castro handed over the awards to Myrna S. Punay, Melchor G. Caayon, and Kagim II. Jajurie, together with their families, as the grand champions representing Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, respectively. The awarding ceremonies was held at the Diosdado Macapagal Auditorium, Landbank Plaza.

On Dec. 18, the Pamaskong Salubong will be launched at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport which will be highlighted by a Presidential Salubong. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo will welcome the modern-day heroes and their families. The President will award three lucky OFWs coming home from Asia, the Middle East and Europe or America with the "Pangkabuhayan Prizes" consisting mainly of a passenger jeepney sponsored by Landbank and Development Bank of the Philippines. The tricycle units are donated by the Philippine National Bank, Amosup, and OWWA. The daily activities of Pamaskong Salubong will be undertaken until Dec. 31 at

major international airports in Clark, Cebu, Davao, and Zamboanga to make the OFWs' homecoming memorable and hassle-free. There will also be daily raffle draws to be participated in by the OFWs and the winners will be awarded gift packages courtesy of Philamlife, Sunlife, PHIC, Holiday Inn Clark, Quadrillon Group, Mama Sita, Duty Free.

Simultaneous with all the activities is the nationwide OFW Family Day where fiesta-like extravaganzas are celebrated in the 17 regions on different dates from Dec. 2 to 23. This is held in conjunction with the Salubong activities for the visiting OFWs during the Christmas season. Aside from activities such as Filipino games and entertainment, OWWA will give excellence awards to its scholars, posthumous awards to deceased overseas Filipino community leaders and recognition awards to OWWA institutional partners.

Another significant part of the event is the OWWAish where chosen beneficiaries who come from the poorest of the poor will be awarded prizes that will be used for income-generating activities to improve their socio-economic conditions. The Pamaskong Handog programs and activities are supported by DOLE, DFA, POEA, MIAA, BID, BOC, Globe Telecom, Microsoft, Amosuf, and Smart.

OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION Regional Operations Coordination Service 2006 Family Day		
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II		
III		
IV		
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VII		
VIII		
IX		
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XI		
XII		
ARMY		
NAVY		

'Keep seamen on ball'

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment has ordered the inspection of all the country's maritime training schools to ensure that the seafarers they graduate meet the requirements of the global maritime industry.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion directed the Maritime Training Council (MTC) to conduct the inspections in accordance with the 1978 Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention.

Brion said the MTC, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment, will inspect the maritime training providers' facilities for maritime safety courses and applications of the mandatory management training courses for the Filipino seafarers.

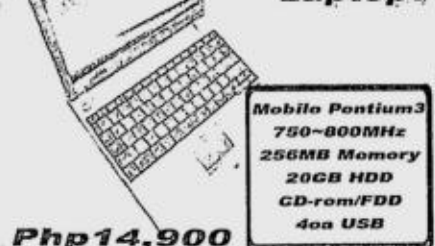
He said the inspection was in line with the government's efforts to ensure that the country's maritime schools produced seafarers who met the standards of competence specified by the 1978 STCW Convention.

He noted that the International Maritime Organization required seafarers on board foreign vessels plying international waters to comply with the STCW's standards of competence. Jerome Aning

explained that compliance with the STCW Convention would ensure the employability of Filipino seamen and women in the global maritime industry.

He noted that the International Maritime Organization required seafarers on board foreign vessels plying international waters to comply with the STCW's standards of competence. Jerome Aning

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455-2176, 455-2177, 455-2178, 455-2179, 455-2180, 455-2181, 455-2182, 455-2183, 455-2184, 455-2185, 455-2186, 455-2187, 455-2188, 455-2189, 455-2190, 455-2191, 455-2192, 455-2193, 455-2194, 455-2195, 455-2196, 455-2197, 455-2198, 455-2199, 455-2200, 455-2201, 455-2202, 455-2203, 455-2204, 455-2205, 455-2206, 455-2207, 455-2208, 455-2209, 455-2210, 455-2211, 455-2212, 455-2213, 455-2214, 455-2215, 455-2216, 455-2			

Keep On Dancing

PLDT Celebrates with Top Corporate Clients at the Momentous Pasasalamat Night Bash



L-R: PLDT FVP & CBOO, Cesar Enriquez, PLDT Relationship Manager, Antonio Coronel, HBC Quality Systems Department Manager, Janet Atutubo, HBC COO, Susan Loyola, PLDT SVP & CBG Head, Eric Alberto, Reyes Hair Company Int'l Operations & Supply Manager, Dina Marie Reyes, HBC Buying & Merchandising Manager, Gabriel Domingo, and Reyes Hair Company CEO, Celestino Reyes.



L-R: NTT Communications Sr. Advisor, Masaki Inomata, NTT Communications Sr. Advisor, Masanori Haneishi, Alcatel Philippines Inc. VP for Services & Operations, Raymond Huang, Alcatel Philippines Inc. Key Account Manager, Melendy Lusa, and Alcatel President and CEO, Hervé Pourcin.



L-R: PLDT Corporate Business Group-Public Sector Head, Renato Castañeda, Townes Inc. Gen. Manager, Eli Pacho, Integrated Micro Electronics Inc. President, Arthur Tan, Pricon Micro Electronics Inc. President, Freddy Pacho, Board of Investment Director & PEZA Board Member, Francis Ferrer, REMEC Broadband Wireless Int'l Inc. President, Domingo Bonifacio, Laus Group of Companies Chairman Clark Development Corporate President, Levy Laus, and PLDT Sr. Relationship Manager, Jane Caliling.

L-R: PLDT Corporate Business Group-Public Sector Head, Renato Castañeda, US Embassy Deputy Ambassador, Paul Jones, PLDT FVP & CBOO, Cesar Enriquez, Ian Gray, US Embassy Counselor for Management Affairs, Catherine Ebert-Gray, and PLDT CBG-VIP Accounts Head, Anton Lim.



L-R: PLDT Sr. Manager Corporate Collection Government Accounts, Leo Castro, Presidential Security Group Chief, Gen. Romeo Prestosa, PLDT CBG-VIP Accounts Head, Anton Lim, PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head, Jay Lagdameo, and CSAFP Staff Judge Advocate, Col. Pedro Herrera-Davila.



L-R: Landbank EVP, Jose Nograles, JP Morgan Chairman, Robert Panillo, and First Guarantee Life Assurance Co. Inc. President & CEO, Peter Coytuto.



Compuware CEO, Chito Beltran and Max's Ermita Inc. President, Robert Trota.



L-R: BDO FVP, Charles Rodriguez, BDO Capital EDP, Ed Fraga, PLDT & SMART Chairman Manny Pangilinan, PLDT SVP & Head Eric Alberto, PLDT FVP & CBOO, Cesar Enriquez, and Standard Chartered VP, Alvin Ortiz.



L-R: Shell Shared Services Asia BV Country General Manager, Noel Paraiso, Union Bank Philippines EVPs, Teddy Panganiban and Hermie Pugeda, PLDT FVP & CBOO Cesar Enriquez, PLDT & SMART Chairman, Manny Pangilinan, Katherine Jones, and PLDT SVP & CBG Head, Eric Alberto.

L-R: NTT America SVP US MNC Sales, Lawrence Fisher, NTT Communications Sr. Executive Advisor and Board of Director, Tsuyoshi Kawashima, PLDT & SMART Chairman, Manny Pangilinan, Ambassador Albert Del Rosario, and NTT Communications Chief Operating Advisor and Board Director, Tatsuo Kono.



CALLEXPAND, Inc. guests from L-R: Enrique "Ivan" Salazar, COO, Allaksandr Karatkevich, CEO, Heather Fedrock, Sahlee Guevarra, Admin Manager, and CFO, Willy Villanueva.



L-R: Unilever Procurement Manager, Boy Raymu, Relationship Manager, JB Dela Cruz, Unilever IT Lito Dela Cruz, Unilever Country IT Infrastructure Mike Nicolas, Unilever IT Country Head, Malta C. Unilever Senior Manager, Ginger Ubaldo, and Unilever Manager, Pinky Francisco.

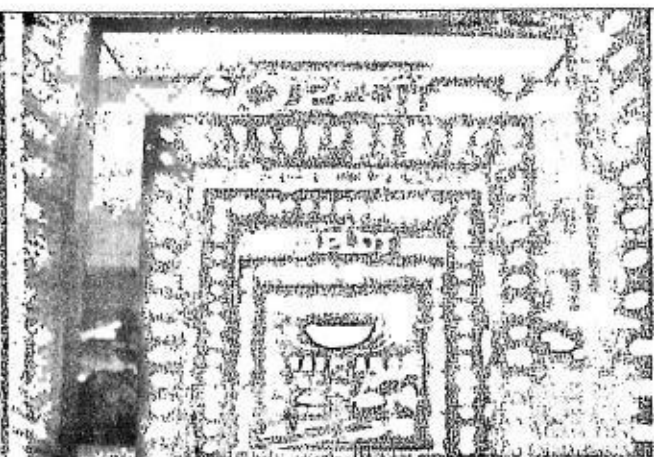
Thousands of corporate clients trooped to the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) to take part in PLDT's Pasasalamat Night, an event held to celebrate the company's appreciation for its trusted partnerships. Throughout the years, PLDT has established very rewarding relationships with heavyweights in practically every industry. Pasasalamat night is PLDT's annual celebration of past ventures and a perfect ending to an eventful year. After reviewing this year's 3rd quarter results, the telco giant certainly had plenty of reasons to celebrate.

Bottles of bubbly, gift certificates, iPod Nanos, digital cameras, cellular phones, DVD players, PDAs, flat screen TVs and other fabulous prizes were immediately raffled off as soon as guests arrived and registered. Charming hosts Tracy Abad and Missy Arlata welcomed everyone to a fun-filled evening as they entered the brightly lit, neon-themed hall. Bossanova sensation Sitti kicked off Pasasalamat Night with smooth lounge music as guests sampled an

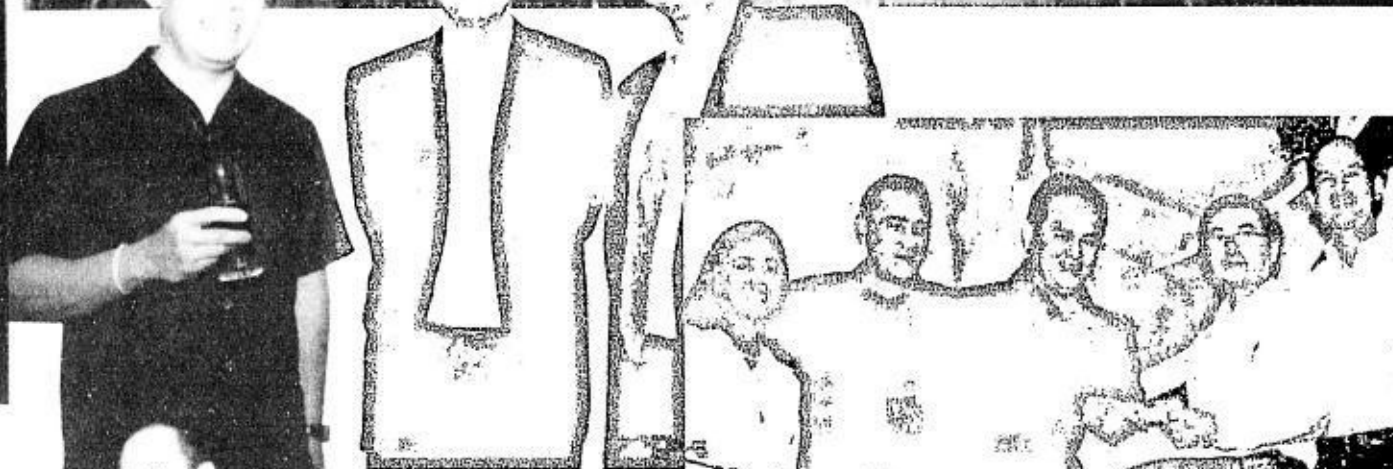
assortment of home decors provided by VnM.

As the festivities rolled on the animated and charismatic Berni Uy brought the house down with her rendition of Tina Turner's "Proud Mary". Classic favorites from "the bands 8 Tracks and Rage moved partygoers to cut loose on the dance floor and on the surrounding platforms. Towards the end of the night, winners of the much-awaited grand raffle were announced.

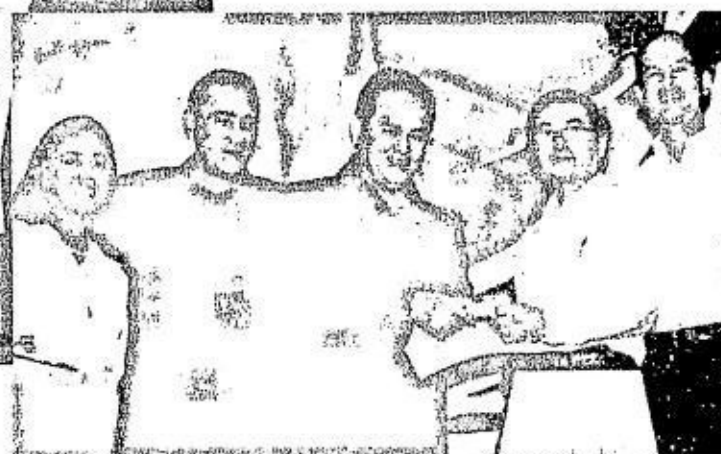
The lucky guests were ABS-CBN's Nidely Academia, who won an Intel Core Duo laptop and Allied Bank's Benjamin Sim, who went home with a new Honda Civic. The revelry continued as PLDT's very own rock band, CBG One, gave a killer close to a night of entertainment and celebration. This Pasasalamat Night was the perfect culmination to an auspicious year, considering the leaps and bounds PLDT has successfully made with its partners. Alapace, there's no doubt deeper strategic partnerships will continue to grow which will result in many prosperous years to come.



The lovely Tracy Abad of 99.5 RT was the perfect host to an unforgettable evening.



L-R: SPI Technologies President, Ernest Cu, PLDT & SMART CEO, Napoleon L. Nazareno, & Citibank Country Corporate Officer, Sanjiv Vohra.



L-R: PLDT Corporate Marketing Communications Head, Rissa Golliso, PLDT FVP & CBOO, Cesar Enriquez, PLDT SVP & CBG Head, Eric Alberto, winner of the brand new Honda Civic, Allied Bank SAVR, Benjamin Sim & PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head, Jay Lagdameo.



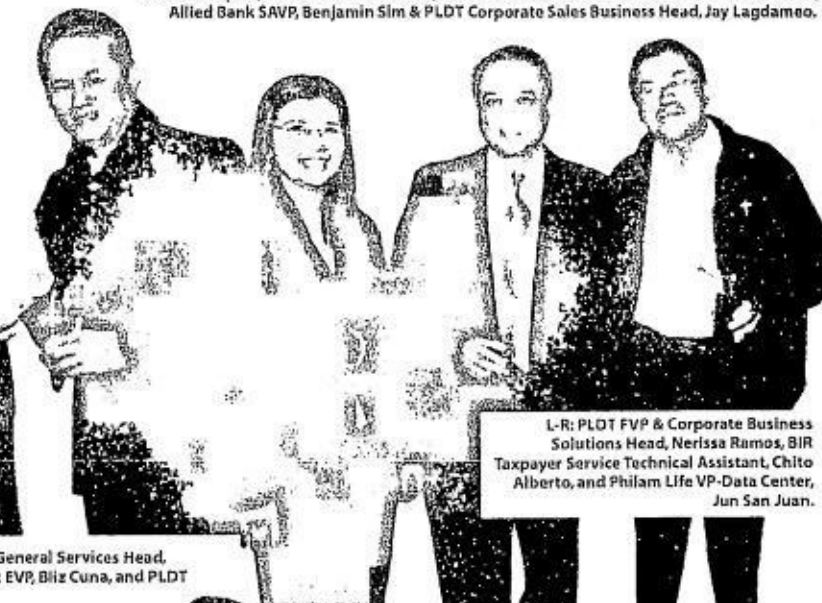
L-R: ABC 5 Managing Director, Bobby Barreiro, SPI Technologies President, Ernest Cu, PLDT & SMART Chairman, Manny Pangilinan, UDB Phils. Group Chairman, Antonio Samson, and ABC 5 President & CEO, Antonio Cojuangco.



L-R: PLDT Sr. Relationship Manager, Ronaldo David, German Embassy Asst. Attache Political Affairs, Beate Morgenstern, and German Embassy First Secretary Head of Administration, Klaus Tesch.



L-R: PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head, Kat Luna-Abelardo, Metrobank General Services Head, Zandra Ty, Metropolitan & Trust Company President, Arthur Ty, Metrobank EVP, Bliz Cuna, and PLDT SVP & CBG Head, Eric Alberto.



L-R: PLDT FVP & Corporate Business Solutions Head, Nerissa Ramos, BIR Taxpayer Service Technical Assistant, Chito Alberto, and Philam Life VP-Data Center, Jun San Juan.



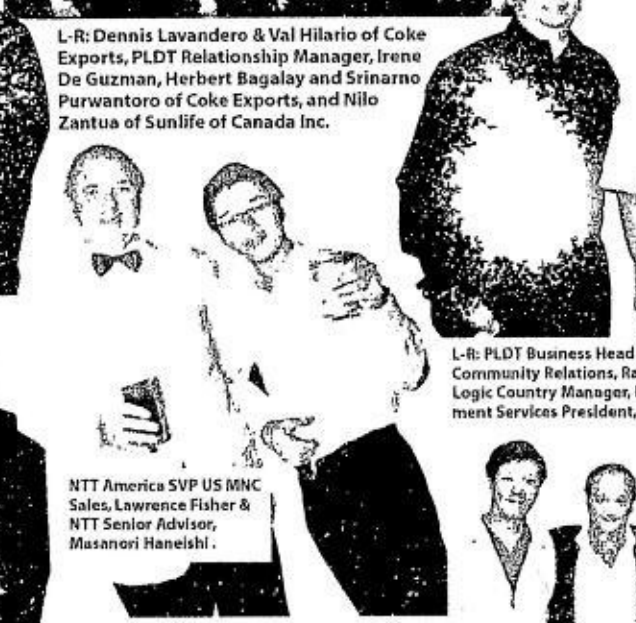
L-R: Dennis Lavandero & Val Hilario of Coke Exports, PLDT Relationship Manager, Irene De Guzman, Herbert Bagalay and Srinarno Purwantoro of Coke Exports, and Nilo Zantua of Sunlife of Canada Inc.



L-R: Dell Procurement Analyst, Edwin Jara, Dell Process Director, Dondi Mapa, Dell Process Director, Susheel Bhasin, and Marvin de la Cruz of Universal Avenue Inc.



L-R: PLDT Sr. Relationship Manager, John Guray, PLDT Domestic Data Category Head, Vic Tria, Landcom CEO, Nanita Lim-Cruz, and Verizon Country Representative, Bobby



NTT America SVP US MNC Sales, Lawrence Fisher & NTT Senior Advisor, Masanori Haneishi.

L-R: NTT Communications Sr. Executive Advisor and Board of Director, Tsuyoshi Kawashima, 3M Phils. Consultant, Mike Herlihy, PLDT Relationship Manager, Erica Jane Alvarez-Pekson, and ICAP President, Boopsie Erana.



ndo, PLDT Consultant, Manager, Business, Silver Asset



Verizon Business Manager, Emy Rayos, VSNL Int'l Country Manager, Inna Baybay, Asianetcom Country Manager, Agnes Gervasio, Asianetcom Carrier Sales Head, Lala Ignacio, Asianetcom Sr. Account Manager, Martie Valmores, and People Support Bong Borja.



L-R: PLDT Business Head for Corp. Alliance & Business Community Relations, Raymond Remoquillo, Client Logic Country Manager, Danilo Reyes, and Teledvelopment Services President, Jon Kaplan.



L-R: PLDT SVP & CBG Head, Eric Alberto, Ortigas Building Property Manager, Rougis Blando, ABMOCI Board Director, Mar Dancel, ABMOCI President & Property Manager, Roland Salutem, Ortigas Center Assn. Inc. Gen. Manager, Vic Buencamino, PLDT & SMART Chairman, Manny Pangilinan, Phil. Stock Exchange Ctr. Property Manager, Gln Romero, JMT Condominium Property Manager, Ruby Merez, Parc Chateau Property Manager, Cristy Salcedo, PLDT Relationship Manager, Rex Dalisay, ABMOCI VP & Head of Ortigas Business Zone, Bong Lintang & Emerald Mansion Property Manager, Cho Munchua.



SM IT Head, Kelsey Go, and his wife Jennifer.



L-R: Citibank VPs, Jerry Lopez, Chito Africa and Ike Tuazon.

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OPINION

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Vigilance isn't sexy

IF ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF LIBERTY, what is the price we pay for vigilance, even of the less-than-eternal variety? The sullen cooperation and the ill-disguised contempt of the powers-that-be.

Much has already been said about the import or impact of today's Church-led prayer rally at the Luneta, but the most inaccurate, the most specious, ultimately the most ungracious statements have come from the Arroyo administration's hard-hitting hard-liners.

EDITORIAL

After the administration's complete retreat on the issue of fast-tracked Charter change, officials such as Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, among others, have attempted to parry the blows of humiliation with some sneaky counter-punching of their own. These counter-attacks have turned out to be low blows—all of them.

The hard-liners said: Today's rally will gauge how much public support there really is for the anti-Charter change position. Wrong. Public outrage over the House majority coalition's blatant, self-serving attempt to change the rules for amending or revising the Constitution has already abated, in large part because Speaker Jose de Venecia has sounded the retreat. Public resentment remains considerable—if there is one thing the genial Filipino cannot stand, it is being played for the fool. But a week is a lifetime in politics, and in the last week much has happened to lessen the people's indignation.

Happened deliberately, we must emphasize, because the behavior of key administration leaders in the past week was designed specifically to dissipate public anger. Speaker De Venecia's Dec. 9 news conference; Malacañang's studied distancing from the controversial House resolution convening the constituent assembly; De Venecia's decision to archive the resolution; the President's indirect but still unmistakable message that now was not the right time to campaign for Charter change—all these were strategic responses with one objective in mind: to stop the rally, or at least to lower the turnout.

To act this way, and then to raise the bar of expectation, is to engage, yet again, in duplicity and deception.

The hard-liners also said: With Charter change on hold, no valid reason exists to continue with the rally. That it is still pushing through only means that self-indulgent religious leaders want to enjoy their political influence and the chance to flex their political muscles. Wrong again. There is a rosary of reasons to push through with the prayer rally. Chief of them is summed up in the succinct words of Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines: "It is a religious response to a political situation. Our government needs to be prayed for."

That includes praying for the enlightenment of the sore winners who currently run the government. But—and here is the point—citizenship is part of governance too. Today's prayer rally reminds us that we must keep vigil with our own responsibilities as citizens. Ever since the President's crisis of legitimacy erupted last year, the country's Catholic bishops have placed the burden of political resolution on the citizenry. Today's prayer rally provides religious leaders—and we include others of non-Catholic persuasion—with a decisive teaching opportunity: a reminder that moral values undergird the political structure, and that political legitimacy is ultimately moral in nature.

Moral scandal

TYRANTS, WHEN THEY DIE, LEAVE BEHIND NOSTALGIA AND even people's love: this is a moral scandal that is difficult to understand through concepts and reason, the scandal of grieving Chileans in the squares ... shedding emotional tears at the funeral of the great "butcher."

But the dictators who symbolically represent the sensitivity of part of the people draw extreme feelings. Great hatred, but also great love. Their end coincides with a feeling of liberation for the victims of the dictatorship. But for another substantial portion of the society, the buried dictator attracts feelings of regret for a past (which is) manipulated by nostalgia ... and which fails to remind of the suffering it has caused to the opponents.

It is hard to admit, but part of Chilean society, not wanting to see the prisons crowded with opponents, dissidents disappearing, the tortured and the dead, has felt that re-establishing order was a priority compared to any other consideration.

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Our new Chief Justice

I RECEIVED WITH MUCH PERSONAL SATISFACTION the report that Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno had finally been appointed Chief Justice of the Philippines directly after the retirement of his immediate predecessor. His elevation as head of the judiciary, albeit somewhat belated, is a recognition of his impressive qualifications as a jurist and his equally deserved recommendations as a private citizen.

I met Rey during the 1960s when I was chairman of the Code Commission, where his fiancée, Luz Delgado, was the head of the research staff. She was my favorite student at the UE College of Law, together with Virginia Soriano (nee Ancheta) who was the Clerk of the First Division of the Supreme Court that I later chaired. Luz and Rey corresponded regularly while he was taking up post-graduate courses in the United States, and his first objective upon his return was to make his sweetheart his wife.

I was one of the sponsors at their wedding and received a similar honor when they renewed their marriage vows after 25 years of familial contentment and professional success. Rey had become my colleague on the high tribunal and Luz was now the Clerk of the Supreme Court *en banc*. The couple was particularly close to me and my wife Sally, who had also become their *ninang*. They kissed her hand whenever they met her, but I was not accorded a similar gesture because Justice Puno and I were co-equals on the Court.

When they were appointed to the Supreme Court in 1993, Rey and Justice Jose C. Vitug, a close friend of mine in the academe, called on me to tell me their good news. I was happy to welcome them to our exclusive fellowship where they were both to distinguish themselves over many of their colleagues. During our deliberations, their junior rank at the time did not deter them from crossing swords with

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



the older members who were not necessarily nor always better.

I remember that one time when Justice Puno did not completely agree with my *ponencia* and frankly said so. He respectfully stated his reservations, which I refuted in a somewhat irate manner that I arrogantly thought befitted my seniority. He did not insist on his objections and said he was not filing any dissent. After the session, Justice Vitug approached me and whispered that Rey had been hurt by our exchange. I immediately called Rey up and offered my apologies but he gracefully dismissed them.

I have complete confidence in the new Chief Justice's sense of justice and have no apprehension that he will feel bound to obey President Macapagal-Arroyo's suggestions in recompense for his appointment.

The integrity of some members of the Court is not for sale, and Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno is the embodiment of this inviolate virtue. Appointed originally by President Fidel V. Ramos, this independent justice was the writer of *Ople v. Torres*, 293 SCRA 144, to mention just one telling example of his sterling objectiveness, that revoked a favorite project of his benefactor.

This was the "National Computerized Identification Reference System" that Malacañang had devised supposedly for the purpose of facilitating transactions with the government. Justice Puno said the order partook of a legislative enactment that could not be issued by the

President. No less importantly, he felt it violated the right to privacy guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, of which he was a vigilant and uncompromising sentinel.

As Justice Puno put it, the Order "pressures the people to surrender their privacy by giving information about them on the pretext that it will facilitate the delivery of basic services."

Given the record-keeping power of the computer, only the indifferent will fail to perceive the danger that AO No. 306 gives the government the power to compile a devastating dossier against unsuspecting citizens."

He also wrote several other important decisions of the Supreme Court, among them *Subayco v. Sandiganbayan* 260 SCRA 798, on the Escalante massacre in 1985; *Tatad v. Secretary of Energy*, 381 SCRA 330, declaring the Oil Deregulation Law violative of the Equal Protection Clause; *Iglesia ni Cristo v. Court of Appeals*, 259 SCRA 529, on freedom of expression; and *Estrada v. Arroyo*, 353 SCRA 452, sustaining the respondent's succession to the office still being claimed by the petitioner.

His more outstanding dissents are those he submitted in *Santiago v. Commission on Elections*, 270 SCRA 106, and the recent case of *Lambino v. Commission on Elections*, GR No. 174153, Oct. 25, 2006, where he again argued that there was a sufficient statute implementing the initiative under Article XVII of the Constitution. In *Cruz v. Secretary of Natural Resources*, 347 SCRA 128, which was a challenge to the Indigenous People's Rights Act, he voted against the petitioner although I was his two-time godfather.

I congratulate Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno and wish him Godspeed in his new career as head of the judiciary. The only flaw in his moment of lonely joy is the absence of his departed and beloved Luz, but he assured me that she was also sharing his happiness "*doon sa itaas*."

What should we do?

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD



block to true love. It is also the biggest block to peace and progress in our country, in the world. The heart of the message of Christmas is that of love. If we don't love, then Christmas is just a sentimental tradition, an event that happened some 2,000 years ago. We make Christmas happen again whenever we love.

I had Mass at the Pag-Ibig office in Makati, and I was edified to hear that officials and employees alike have decided to forego their Christmas party this year for the sake of our suffering brothers and sisters in Bicol. That's what we all should do. Perhaps we all, in our own way, can make some sacrifice, especially this Christmas. Right now, stop awhile and ask the Lord what we can do for Him, especially this Christmas.

John the Baptist has a very specific message to tax collectors in today's Gospel: "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Bull's-eye.

John the Baptist also has this message to soldiers and law enforcers: "Do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages." Bull's-eye again.

Fr. Rod Salazar, SVD, president of the University of San Carlos, proposes the "One Step Beyond" formula. He writes that in doing good things, we should go one step beyond what is asked and expected. In the things that we need to take, we should not go one step beyond what is necessary. Finally, in the things that we are not supposed to

do, not only should we not take the step, we should even stop one step before.

Christmas is about a God who went out of His way to get involved with us. In preparation for Christmas, let us all go out of our way to meet our God, and present to Him a humble, contrite and grateful heart. Let us also go out of our way to reach out to one another, especially to the poor and powerless, and to our enemies and those who have wronged us. And let us go out of our "usual" ways and flee from the roads that lead us to sin and wrongdoings.

A Christmas moment happened as I was writing this column. A family that has just lost their mother dropped by and asked me to join them. And I'm glad I did. Perhaps we can do some letting go and letting God this Christmas, and drop our personal agenda and concerns to be present to other people. Remember, Christmas is not so much about presents as presence.

Have you noticed how beautiful the stars are at night? Have you experienced the serenity of cool December mornings? If you have not, maybe you have been too caught up in the rush and have forgotten what Christmas is all about. Slow down and take time. Look inside your heart, and there find God. Look around you, and there, too, find your God. I am one with you in finding God in our hearts, in nature and in people, especially this Christmas.

Life is indeed full of happy and sad events. Don't give up on your faith for God will keep you afloat. Just remember to call on Him. For prayer request, text FJREQ<your name> <prayer request> and send to 2948 for Globe/Sun or 3940 for Smart. God bless you. Mama Mary loves you!

A moment with the Lord:
Lord, remind me what to do, so that I can find you, especially this Christmas. Amen.

The war without honors

IN JUNE 2002, IN A SPEECH DELIVERED AT West Point, President George W. Bush enunciated for the first time his "preemption doctrine" of a war to stop a war. The speech, written by presidential speechwriter Michael Gerson, laid down the groundwork and justification for the invasion of Iraq—"the war on terror will not be won on the defensive."

On March 19, 2003, the United States invaded Iraq, citing the growing menace of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the hands of Saddam Hussein. A few days earlier, Vice President Dick Cheney was quoted as saying, "my belief is we will be greeted as liberators." He also shot down the view expressed by US Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki that the post-war phase in Iraq would require several hundred thousand troops, claiming that this was an exaggeration.

Almost four years after the invasion, no WMDs have been found in Iraq and the country is now in the throes of a civil war with hundreds of civilians being killed on a weekly basis, even as the United States tries to figure out how to extricate itself from the quagmire it created.

There is an interesting article on the Iraq war in the Dec. 11 issue of Time magazine. "Iraq: The War Without Honors" points out that 464 Medals of Honor were handed out during World War II as against only two that have been awarded during this war, which has now lasted longer than World War II. The Medal of Honor is America's highest military award for bravery in combat. The Philippine equivalent of that is the Medal for Valor which has been awarded to 11 officers only, mostly for actions carried out in the 1990s. Two of those awardees are now facing court martial proceedings for their alleged participation in the February coup plot.

The article also notes that the same holds true for the second-highest honors, the Service Crosses. In World War II, 8,716 were given out. In the Iraq War, only 26 have been awarded so far.

The Pentagon is now looking at new guidelines

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan



for consistency among the services. The Army "has displayed a stunning generosity in handing out the mid-level Bronze Medal. It has given an astonishing 52,000 since Sept. 11, 2001 as compared with fewer than 1,500 for the Marines."

Part of the explanation for the large discrepancy is the fact that the process for getting medals has become more cumbersome. The nature of combat is also a big factor. There are fewer opportunities for individual heroics in a conflict involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or suicide bombers.

In Bob Woodward's recent bestseller "State of Denial," he narrates the experience of Frank Miller, a 22-year veteran of the Pentagon bureaucracy. It is the kind of story that one doesn't come across in the usual reporting on the war.

Miller was head of the Executive Steering Group (ESG) tasked to coordinate the Iraq issues among the different federal agencies.

In August 2004, Miller traveled to Iraq with Gen. Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Miller kept asking the ground commanders at all levels the same question: What do you need?

"The division commanders with between 10,000 to 20,000 men and women said: Translators. The battalion commanders with 600 to 800 troops: Translators. Small teams or platoons were being sent to search homes, seal off areas, knock on and break down doors without translators who could speak Arabic."

"The shortage was unconscionable, Miller thought. If American troops and Iraqis couldn't

talk to each other, the possibilities for misunderstanding were compounded. Monumental communication failures were occurring everyday. Sometimes the troops on patrol might as well go in blind. Nothing could solidify the image of Americans as imperial occupiers more than teams of heavily armed soldiers with helmets and flak jackets careening around the country, unable to communicate, and seemingly uninterested in what the Iraqis thought, felt or wanted.

"Miller wondered why an old civilian bureaucrat like himself had to alert the military that they needed translators at the unit level. Kids were dying because of the shortage. He raised the issue with the commandant of the Marine Corps and the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and, finally, with Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Adviser."

He was told to fix it. After several months, the problem still had not been solved. It was now worse than a scandal.

One would think that for a nation which had gone through Gulf War I more than 10 years ago and which had been preparing to launch Gulf War II with almost unlimited resources—some \$8 billion a month—the need for translators would have been a priority even before the start of the conflict.

On the Asean Summit: The government's explanation for the postponement—the approaching typhoon "Seniang"—was criticized by Japanese Trade Minister Akira Amari who said: "[C]onsidering the size of the typhoon and the fact that it would have passed by Sunday morning, the reason for the postponement is extremely puzzling." Amari went on to say that the rescheduling "ruined the credibility of the Philippine government." Those are strong words coming from a friendly nation whose prime minister has just visited the Philippines. It is difficult to believe that Amari's comments did not reflect the views of his government.

Yesterday, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced that all 10 Asean leaders have confirmed their attendance at the re-scheduled summit to be held next month.

Method to madness

RAY BRADBURY ONCE SAID THAT YOU HAVE TO STAY drunk on writing, so that reality cannot destroy you. Sometimes I wonder how all the people who do not write or paint or sing manage to deal with the horror of everyday life. I'm beginning to think that there are things that even writing cannot save you from.

I have just realized that I can't write today.

I've spent the past five hours pacing over the brown fake-wood linoleum floor, tracing the snowflakes on my pajamas with a pencil and counting ants on the wall. I suspect I'm going mad, as there are voices screaming in my head, but I'm told the mad never know they're mad, so I reassure myself that I'm perfectly sane.

"Every writer," says Dr. Edmund Bergier, "without exception, is a masochist, a sadist, a peeping Tom, an exhibitionist, a narcissist, an 'injustice collector' and a depressed person constantly haunted by fears of unproductivity." As there are almost 200 reported writers who committed suicide, I tend to agree with the good doctor. Sometimes, I stare at the blank screen so long, I expect to see drops of blood forming on my forehead. My mother tells me that my journalist grandfather raged when his editor added a "very" in his column, and I've been known to cry over misplaced semicolons.

But it's not punctuation marks or a lack of stories that makes it impossible to fill 6,500 characters today. It would be an outright lie to say there's nothing to write about. There are so many, thousands really, tragedy upon tragedy, story upon story, one moronic statement over another. The pages on my battered notebook are crowded with headlines and comments and red-inked four-letter words that can never be printed on this page. It's the sheer number of events—of deaths, of corruption, of the daily disillusionments when it comes to the people and institutions I was told to respect. I admit to being an idealist—which is why every disillusionment comes with the same shock as finding out that James Dean was gay.

The stories are all over the place, in the news, between the lines of column after column, over the airwaves and on television—the thousand and one letdowns of 21st-century Philippines. The justice department is run by a bigot, University of the Philippines professors happily double as government apologists, and Miriam Defensor-Santiago appears to have verbal diarrhea, and is busily regurgitating the thesaurus she swallowed, as well as whatever semblance of credibility she had left. Only Ninoy Aquino is above reproach, but Ninoy is dead, and look at what's happening in Hacienda Luisita.

Two days ago, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco apologized for the mistake he made in supporting the House ramming the constitutional assembly. "I am sorry for the mistake we made," he said. Mea culpa, mea culpa—my fault, my fault. He claims he actually prefers to have a constitutional convention, but he had to follow his party's stand. Unless mea culpa means, "I admit I have no brain," it doesn't wash. I wanted to write about him, but really there is no use to berate such a man. He apologizes for the party's mistake, but admits no failure in failing to think for himself. It is frightening to think of how many others like him may sit on a congressional easy chair, snoozing away the taxpayers' money—and much more frightening knowing that people like him will probably get reelected anyway.

Yesterday, the UP Lantern parade was canceled due to "security threats." Last night, over 200 homes were eaten by fire. In Bicol, people are crammed into airless shelters; mourning fathers and wives live off donations from trucks emblazoned with "Mercy Mission." Reports claim that an old woman in ravaged Albay embraced President Macapagal-Arroyo and told her "not to forget them." Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye claims the incident might have left a lasting image in the President's mind, and "prompted her to launch the mercy mission." I never knew that the duty to provide calamity aid is contingent on the President's compassion.

Recently the press has been assaulted left and right by libel suits and accusations of an agenda. I've been called an enemy of the state by an old man whose skin was slowly turning red while he berated me with a cane. I've gotten letters from readers who say that there are too many bad things happening, too much negative news in the paper. I guess it's more confusing for my generation. I'm 21, I was taught to celebrate Edsa, to fight tooth and nail for freedom, to stand for something, anything. I believe in truth, in democracy, in free speech, and the right of a person to call the President's husband a self-important a--.

Mark Twain once said that it is a writer's duty to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Although I do not believe this completely—for I think there is a value too in romance, in drama, in dancing penguins and Manny Pacquiao—I also believe that there is some sort of natural human need to set things right.

Someone once told me that those who were tortured by the Armed Forces of the Philippines deserved it, because they opposed the government. "There will always be abuses in government," says another reader. "There will always be corruption, murder, rape, kidnappings, etc. Let God deal with them." I wonder if this is what many Filipinos think, that corruption and rape and murder are all inevitabilities, best ignored so we can focus on the bright and the good. I wonder if the person who wrote this would feel the same way if his girlfriend were raped, his brother tortured or his father thrown into jail without cause.

And I guess that's why I find myself sitting in front of my computer today, ranting and rambling about being unable to write, and writing anyway. I still think it's the natural madness of the writer, and not mine, that keeps pounding away at keys and pretending it all matters in the end. In a country like the Philippines, I'll take madness over indifference.

For comments, just text: PM REBEL name, age, location, message then send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for smart. E-mail at pat.evangelista@gmail.com

THEY SAID

Heaviest burden

"The problem that bears heaviest on our country is not the lack of food and jobs, terrorism, or the string of typhoons. It's the corrupt politicians and a government with no semblance of decency."

—Bishop Soerates Villegas in a pastoral statement on Charter change

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Pinoys in a 'Star Wars Spectacular'

STAND-UP COMICS MAY MAKE MUCH JOKE fodder out of "Star Wars" fans, particularly those who stand in line (and even camp out) for a "Star Wars" movie costumed as their favorite characters.

But there is no doubting that the film franchise has become a major cultural phenomenon—not just in the United States but all around the world. Not all fans may enjoy dressing up as one of the many characters—humans, droids, Storm Troopers, extraterrestrials or Jedi—but millions count the franchise as a major influence in the last 30 years or so, a contemporary myth if there ever was one.

In my home, for instance, the men in the family have been planning a small "Star Wars" party ever since the Star Movies channel announced that it would be showing all six movies in the order in which the story is told, starting with Episode One, "The Phantom Menace" and ending with Episode Six "Return of the Jedi." As any half-baked fan knows, the film saga opened with Episode Four "A New Hope," which, we know by now, actually begins midway through the tale.

But "Star Wars" is more than just the movies.

On New Year's Day 2007, for instance, another major "Star Wars" event will take place—the "Star Wars Spectacular" in the 118th Tournament of Roses Parade, where "Star Wars" creator George Lucas will serve as Grand Marshal.

Nearly one million people watching the parade live, and an estimated 30 million more watching on TV, will behold the "Star Wars"-themed event, which will feature two remarkable floats (made entirely out of roses) representing planets seen in the "Star Wars" saga, as well as 200 fans from around the world, clad in Storm Trooper outfits marching in formation.

JOINING these Storm Troopers are two Filipinos—Manny Mendoza and Rej Layug, the daughter of a friend, who will be one of only two Asian women marching in the parade.

Manny and Rej represent the "Philippine Outpost" of a global organization known as the "501st Legion," also known as "Vader's Fist," which bills itself as "The World's Defini-

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



tive Imperial Costuming Organization."

Founded in 1997 by Albin Johnson, the "501st Legion" is composed of proud "Star Wars" fans who channeled their love for costuming into an organization that aims to "celebrate the Star Wars movies through wearing costumes," to "promote the quality and improvement of costumes and props," and to "contribute to the local community through charity and volunteer work."

"The members of the 501st are some of the most amazing Star Wars fans in the world," said Tom Warner, senior director of marketing at San Francisco-based LucasFilm Ltd.

"They show their dedication by making their own replica costumes, and when George Lucas saw them first hand around the world during the international premieres of 'Star Wars: Episode 3: Revenge of the Sith,' he wanted to do something special to honor the extraordinary work they do for charities and their communities."

Early this year, LucasFilm proposed the idea of the "Star Wars Spectacular," described as "a celebration filled with floats, costumed characters, Star Wars music and marching Storm Troopers" to the Tournament of Roses Parade committee, which responded enthusiastically.

THE 200 Storm Troopers marching in the parade will all be members of the 501st Legion from 22 countries and 36 US states.

Once the "Star Wars Spectacular" was approved, said Warner, "we knew we had a formidable task to identify 200 members of the 501st who could do the grueling work of marching five-and-a-half miles in full Storm Trooper armor without a break."

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David



ardless of where they stand on issues. It is also seen in their skepticism about elections and the sense of futility they express when they talk about corruption in government.

I think that what our people are seeking at this point is not an overhaul of the whole political order, but a collective resolve to allow our present institutions to work as they should. They see this as requiring not so much a change in the form of government as a change in the quality of our leaders. That is the reason why the question of alternative leaders keeps coming up. The question of "who," however, hides a host of other more difficult questions.

Where do we find these alternative leaders? What assurance do we have that, once in power, they will not behave in exactly the same way as today's politicians? Aren't a society's politicians, after all, merely the reflection of the mindset of its citizens? In considering the political problems of our society, can we avoid inquiring into the nature of our economic system, our moral system and the rest of our way of life?

The complexity of these questions overwhelms people, often inducing in them a paralysis of will that favors the status quo. President Arroyo has been the biggest beneficiary of this confusing moment in the nation's political life.

But difficult as it may be, the problem is not insoluble as it appears. Marx once said that we become aware of problems typically because the conditions for solving them already exist. One of the conditions, to my mind, that has made us increasingly aware of our political problems is the

change in consciousness that has been quietly taking place among Filipinos in the last three decades. Its spear point is a growing assertive middle class with modern expectations about governance, leadership and citizenship. It is this class that has been most vocal in defending our democratic institutions from corruption.

These institutions are as modern as we can hope to build them, but, alas, they are still run by politicians with feudal instincts. Viewed from this perspective, our political crisis is really a symptom of this disconnect between design and performance. More and more of our people are seeing this contradiction and want to end it. Many, it is true, are putting up their hands in surrender, but countless others persist in the fight to close the gap. They know this will not be achieved overnight.

Some observers are alarmed over the kind of responses that are generated by the growing frustration with the current political impasse. They say that while critics of the Arroyo government strongly condemn the shameful behavior of the traditional politicians, they do not seem to mind going back to an era of religious hegemony, when preachers acted as the arbiters of political power. This warning is fair and important; it should not be ignored.

In this regard, I am personally gratified by the statement of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines head, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, on the nature of the "prayer rally" to be held today at the Luneta. "It is a religious response to a political situation. Our government needs to be prayed for," he said. There is progress here. Church leaders are mindful of their moral functions. But one may detect in such tempered statements a wish to leave political advocacy and leadership to the laity. We must welcome this. Without this restraint, churches risk losing their own legitimacy as communities in an increasingly differentiated world.

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to
jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

How to detect fake peso bills and coins

EVERY DAY, PESO BILLS AND COINS CHANGE HANDS IN COUNTLESS TRANSACTIONS across the country, keeping the economy going. The pace of bills and coins changing hands this Christmas season will accelerate as people buy presents, food and decorations, and give cash as gift to kids, friends or loved ones.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is known to print bills to cope with the growing demand in this season of gift-giving.

As of Nov. 30, 1.04 billion pieces of 5-peso coins, 237 million pieces of 10-peso coins, 271 million pieces of 500-peso notes, and 113 million pieces of 1,000-peso notes were already in circulation, according to the Bangko Sentral.

Also in circulation are counterfeit bills and coins, especially the 5- and 10-pe-

so coins.

"The public should be aware of the existence of counterfeit bills and coins [this] Christmas season ... where there is a lot of money changing hands," says Fe de la Cruz, BSP director for corporate affairs.

Last month, an INQUIRER report said bus conductors and tricycle drivers in Laoag City were refusing to accept 5- and 10-peso coins as payment, afraid that they may be counterfeit.

Maja Gratia Malic, a manager at the BSP cash department, advises the public to familiarize itself with the genuine bank notes and coins in order to spot the fakes.

Know salient features of BSP bank notes

TO ENABLE A CASH HANDLER TO spot counterfeit money, one has to be familiar with the genuine bank notes of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Study the workmanship of each denomination of genuine Bangko Sentral bank notes. One must take note and familiarize himself or herself with the various characteristics of the following security features:

A. PAPER—The genuine note is printed on a special paper, which is rough when one runs his or her fingers through it. It does not glow under ultraviolet light. During the manufacturing process of the paper, the watermark, security fibers, security threads and iridescent band are incorporated.

1. Watermark—This is the silhouette of the portrait appearing on the face of the note. Sharp details of the light-and-shadow effect can be seen when the note is viewed against the light. The contours of the features of the silhouette can be felt only by running the fingers over the design on relatively new notes.

2. Security fibers—These are embedded red and blue visible fibers scattered at random on both surfaces and can be readily picked off by using any pointed instrument.

3. Embedded security thread—This is a special thread implanted vertically off center of the note during the paper's manufacture. It appears as broken line for 5s, 10s, and 20s and a continuous line for 50s, 100s, 200s, 500s and 1000s.

4. Windowed security thread—The narrow thread is vertically located like "stitches" on the face of the note with "clear text" of the numerical value in repeated sequence. It changes in color from magenta to green or green to magenta depending on the angle of view. It appears on the improved version of 100-, 500- and 1,000-peso and the new 200-peso notes.

5. Iridescent band—The band is a wide glistening gold vertical stripe with the numerical value printed in series. This appears on the improved version of 100-, 500- and 1,000-peso and the new 200-peso notes.

B. PRINTING—Generally, the impression of the different printed features are well-defined, sharp and distinct. The fingers can readily feel the main prints on the front and back designs of relatively new notes because of the measurable thickness of ink deposited on the paper.

1. Portrait—Appears life-like. The eyes sparkle. Shadings are formed by fine lines that give the portrait a characteristic facial expression, which is extremely difficult to copy.

2. Serial number—Composed of one or two prefix letters and six to seven digits, which are clearly printed. The letters and numerals are uniform in size and thickness, evenly spaced and well-aligned. They glow under ultraviolet light. A bank note with six "0"-digit serial number is a specimen note and has no value as it is not legal tender.

3. Background and lacework design—The background design is made up of multicolored and well-defined lines. The lacework design is composed of fine, web-like criss-crossing lines, which are continuous and traceable even at the intersection.

4. Vignette—The design on the back of the note is composed of lines and dashes that are fine, distinct and sharp. The varying color tone gives a vivid look to the picture that makes it stand out.

C. ADD-ON SPECIAL FEATURES

1. Concealed value—Found only in the 500-peso denomination. This is located in the lower left corner of the face of the 500-peso note and is recognizable when the note is held at eye level.

2. Optically variable ink—A special characteristic of the 1,000-peso denomination, which is also located in the lower left corner of the face of the note. It changes color from green to blue or blue to green when the note is held at different angles.

These security features are easily recog-

Design and security features of the 1,000-peso bill

Watermarks of fake and genuine 500-peso bills

Counterfeit

Genuine

A 500-peso bill has a dotted line at right and a shiny strip at left. The earlier notes issues do not have these features.

Test your peso IQ

1. What security feature is found in the 1,000-peso note?

a) security thread; b) fluorescent printing; c) optically variable ink

2. Which denomination bears a concealed value?

a) 500-peso; b) 20-peso; c) 200-peso

3. Whose portrait is on the 100-peso note?

a) Benigno Aquino; b) Emilio Aguinaldo; c) Manuel Roxas

4. Which denomination has a predominantly orange color?

a) 20-peso; b) 100-peso; c) 10-peso

5. Which denomination has a composite portrait of three Filipino heroes during the World War II?

a) 10-peso; b) 1,000-peso; c) 50-peso

6. Where is the watermark located in a note?

a) Left side of the face of the note; b) Right side of the face of the note; c) Center of the note

7. What is the highest denomination in the present circulation coins series?

a) 5-peso; b) 1-peso; c) 10-peso

8. What is the lowest denomination in the present circulation coins series?

a) 5-sentimo; b) 10-sentimo; c) 1-sentimo

9. What is the highest denomination in the legal tender notes in circulation?

a) 500-peso; b) 1,000-peso; c) 200-peso

10. What design is on the back of the 200-peso note?

a) Portrait of former President Diosdado Macapagal; b) Aguinaldo Shrine; c) Oath taking of President Macapagal-Arroyo

ANSWERS:

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (a) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (c)

Distinguishing marks of counterfeit 10-peso and 5-peso coins

Counterfeit

Genuine

Counterfeit 10-peso coin

Design
o Obverse—Profiles of A. Mabini and A. Bonifacio (bigger than genuine)
o Reverse—BSP logo (off-center)

Rim
o Obverse—Elevated (with rounded edge)

Reverse—Elevated (with sharp edge and intermittent readings)
Metallic grain—Coarse (with bubbles)
Inner core—Pale yellow or yellow brass in color
Other characteristics—Slightly waxy to the touch; magnetic

Counterfeit

Genuine

Counterfeit 5-peso coin

Design
o Obverse—Profile of Emilio Aguinaldo (details of the profile are not well-defined especially at the eye portion)
o Reverse—BSP logo (appears bloated) and 12-scallop border design is

occasionally off-center and touches the rim
Letters and numbers—Wider than the genuine
Metallic grain—Coarse
Color—Most of the time dark yellow

COIN PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BSP

INFOGRAPHIC AND PAGE DESIGN: ERNIE SAMBO

Department of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for assistance at:

• **Currency Analysis and Redemption Sub-Group**
Room 202, Second Floor, Multi-Storey Building, BSP Complex, Malate, Manila
Telephone Nos.: 524-2777 or 524-7011 local 2296

• **Investigation Sub-Group**
Room 302, Multi-Storey Building, BSP

Complex, Malate, Manila
Telephone Nos.: 523-9806 or 524-7011 local 2388

or go to the nearest Bangko Sentral Regional Office/Sub-Regional Office Unit in Angeles City, Bacolod, Batac-Ilocos Norte, Cabanatuan, Cagayan de Oro City, Cebu City, Cotabato City, Dagupan, Davao City, Dumaguete, Iloilo City, Kalibo-Aklan, Legaspi City, Lucena, Naga City, San Fernando-La Union, Tacloban, Tuguegarao-Cagayan and Zamboanga City.

SOURCE: BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS

Penalties

Revised Penal Code

• Article 163—Making and importing and uttering (issuing or circulating) false coins
Prison term—6 years and 1 day to 10 years
Fine—P10,000

• Article 164—Mutilation of coins. Importation and utterance of mutilated coins
Prison term—6 months, 1 day to 4 years and 2 months
Fine—P2,000

• Article 165—Selling of false or mutilated coins, without connivance
Prison term—Lower than 1 degree than that prescribed in preceding articles
Fine—none

• Article 166—Forging treasury or bank notes or other documents payable to bearer; importing and uttering such false or forged notes and documents
Prison term—12 years, 1 day to 14 years and 8 months
Fine—P10,000

• Article 167—Counterfeiting, importing and uttering instruments not payable to bearer
Prison term—2 years, 4 months and 1 day to 6 years
Fine—P6,000

• Article 168—Illegal possession and use of false treasury or bank notes and other instrument of credit
Prison term—Lower than one degree than that prescribed articles
Fine—none

• Article 176—Manufacturing and possession of instruments or implementation for falsification
Prison term—2 years, 4 months and 1 day to 6 years
Fine—P10,000

Presidential Decree No. 247

(Defacement, mutilation, tearing, burning or destruction of BSP notes and coins)
Prison term—1 day to 5 years
Fine—P20,000

BSP Circular

No. 61-Series '95

(Consolidated rules and regulations on currency notes and coins)
• Chapter 2—Reproduction and/or use of facsimiles of legal tender Philippine currency notes
• Chapter 3—Reproduction and/or use of facsimiles of legal tender Philippine currency coins
Prison term—5 years, 1 day to 10 years
Fine—none

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32 floating at sea for 6 days saved

By Ven S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—FISHERMEN PLUCKED OUT from the sea 32 persons whose boats ran smack into the middle of bad weather in Eastern Samar at the height of Typhoon "Seniang" on Dec. 9.

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone said those rescued were fishermen aboard two half-submerged fishing boats, FB JL 3 and FB JL 4. The ill-fated fishing boats FB JL 3 and FB JL 4 had 15 crew members and 17 crew members.

Evardone said the fishermen were rescued separately, some off Oras town, located 81 km north

of the capital town of Borongan, and the rest off Hernani town, some 55 km south of Borongan.

Evardone said the two fishing boats were kept floating by Styrofoam containers that they were carrying.

This allowed the boats' crew members to stay in the boats despite the big waves and strong winds.

Last Thursday, the rescued fishermen were immediately brought separately to the district hospitals of Oras and Hernani for treatment.

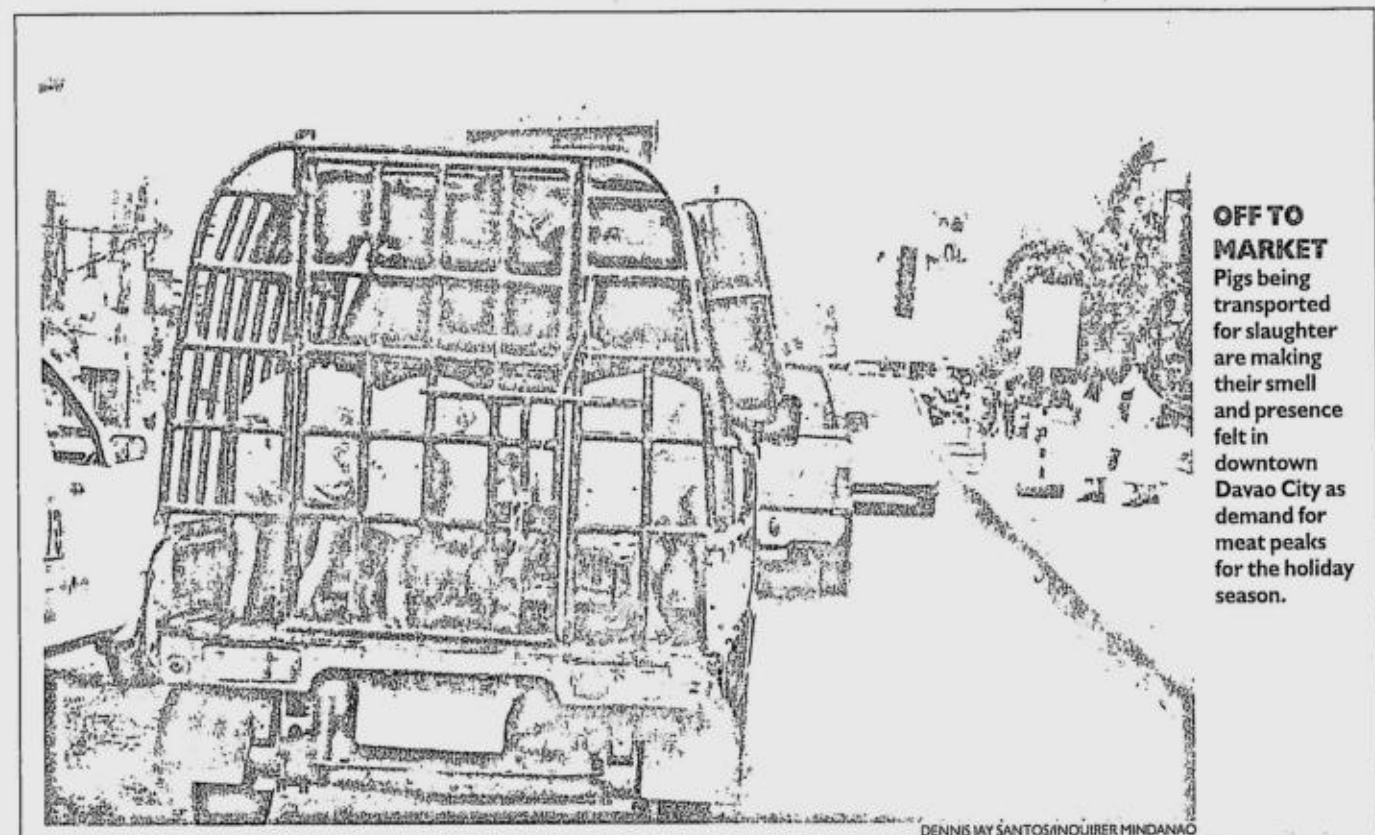
Evardone said those rescued were Edgar Gecozo, Gerardo Ytac, Jeffrey Belocura, Boy Bautista, Joey Perjes, Jose Perjes, Russel Maguifano, Marlon Bano, Oliver Bano, Eddie Mata, Rico Rapatan, Jimmy Ybañes Jr., Jimmy Ybañes Sr., Benjie Tabat, Bartolome Tabat Jr., Danny Ganados, Jose Bautista, Danny Calogada, Jimboy Bironde, Andito Pigarro, Rolando Borneo, Crisanto Betonio, Erijun Tamonan, Jake Bautista, Judy Alquizar, Randy Maginsay, Rolan Gricela,

Reno Rendon, Wennie Mata, Ireneo Tamunan, and Renante Multi-llano.

Yesterday, the provincial government of Eastern Samar provided the survivors with land transportation to their hometowns in Surigao.

Typhoon Seniang, packing winds of 120 km near its center with gustiness of up to 150 kph, made its landfall on Guiuan town in Eastern Samar on Dec. 9.

The typhoon aggravated the sufferings of people in the Bicol region who were reeling from the devastation wrought by Super-typhoon "Reming" and earlier, Super-typhoon "Milenyo."



OFF TO MARKET
Pigs being transported for slaughter are making their smell and presence felt in downtown Davao City as demand for meat peaks for the holiday season.

Politics, business seen motives in mayor's slay

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—POLITICS and business are the main motives in the murder of Maitum, Sarangani Mayor George Yabes, the Central Mindanao police said.

Yabes, 54, was shot by one of two motorcycle-riding men while he was driving near the town's public market on the afternoon of Nov. 11.

His murder outraged residents and civilian officials. They even put up a fund to speed up the resolution of the case. Yabes was well-loved by his people for his dedication to service.

Chief Supt. German Doria, Central Mindanao police chief,

told reporters here on Friday they have now considered Yabes' assassination as solved with the identification of several suspects, including the masterminds.

Doria said the resolution of the case started when they were able to get the cooperation of one of those who allegedly plotted against Yabes.

He said Dimakilang Lali was the one who named the masterminds, the other co-conspirators and the guns-for-hire who carried out the plot.

Doria said Lali had earlier surrendered to the police and executed an extra-judicial confession regarding the Yabes murder case.

In his extra-judicial confession, Lali identified Allan Kamid as the gunman and his back-ups Abu Guiwan alias Abu Balunto,

Monding Usop alias Monding Binasing, Badsagan Gulinda alias Bad Boy and Mike Kamid alias Mike Carbonnel.

Doria said Kamid is now in the hands of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and there were feelers he would be turned over soon.

Lali also made mention of several prominent politicians in Maitum as among those who hired

them to kill Yabes, he said.

But Doria said their names should be withheld until such time the police completed its investigation.

Senior Supt. Edwin Diocos, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the region, said it appears that there were two groups sent to execute Yabes.

Diocos, also co-chair of the Task Force George, said the two groups had worked independently although they conducted simultaneous surveillance on the mayor. *Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*

MILF denies role in al-Qaida, terror plots

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic liberation Front (MILF) denied allegations made by security forces that linked guerrilla leaders to al-Qaida militants and plans to carry out attacks in major cities in Mindanao.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu made the denial after government soldiers claimed they foiled a bombing plot in Davao City by suspected MILF renegades.

"It's not true. We are serious in our peace talks with the government," Kabalu told the INQUIRER.

Maj. Augusto dela Peña, Philippine Air Force information officer, said in a statement obtained by INQUIRER that operatives of the Eastern Mindanao Command Group, consisting of Air Force operatives of the 305th Air Intelligence and Security Squadron, and bomb experts from the 710th Special Operations Wing, recovered a powerful pipe bomb during a raid on a hideout of MILF commander Abdul Mentang somewhere in Davao province.

Admitting that the suspected terrorists managed to escape before the raid, Dela Peña said the pipe bomb, placed in a backpack measuring about 10 inches long and which has a diameter of 3.5, can inflict a similar level of damage as that experienced in the 2003 Sasa Wharf bombing in Davao City.

"It is believed that it was manufactured by known bomber Abdul Manap Mentang. The IED (improvised explosive device) had his classic signature based on findings



A MUSLIM guerrilla sniper practices his skills during a drill in the mountain camps of the MILF in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao. The MILF continues to strengthen its forces as it talks with government peace negotiators.

JEFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

from the 2003 Davao Airport and Sasa Wharf bombings. Likewise, sometime July 2005, Mentang

once again attempted to bomb Davao City during the annual Kadayawan Festivities. Fortunately,

his ill motive was thwarted," Dela Peña said in his statement.

Dela Peña said Mentang is a renegade MILF member and has direct contact with fugitive terrorists Dulmatin and Omar Patek of the Jemaah Islamiyah.

Dela Peña said the plan was a joint effort by known terrorists identified with the group of Faisal Sarip Abdul Rohman Camille alias Barok.

At the same time, he said information also revealed that the bombs were to be carried by MILF renegades Abo Sama and Salik Ahmad.

But according to Kabalu, the names dropped by Dela Peña are not active in their organization.

"They are MILF before, but we removed them from our list," Kabalu said.

Kabalu said the accusation against them will not affect the peace talks set to resume in January next year in Kuala Lumpur.

The government and MILF have been negotiating a peace agreement for several months, declaring several times that they were near to signing a pact.

But the peace talks bogged down over MILF's demand to include close to 1,000 villages as part of their proposed future homeland without a referendum.

The government rejected the demand, saying it was against the Constitution. The government said it could only allow 600 predominantly Muslim villages to be included in the proposed Moro homeland. *Jeffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Across the NATION

NBI seizes pirated CD, DVD machines in Laguna warehouse

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BIÑAN, LAGUNA—THREE DAYS AFTER raiding a warehouse inside an industrial park here, agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Friday took custody of at least seven machines used in the manufacture of pirated compact discs and DVDs.

Armed with a warrant and pay loaders, NBI agents arrived at the area at around 3 p.m. and started loading the machines onto five 10-wheel trucks. They also confiscated thou-

sands of pirated DVDs and audio and video CDs placed inside boxes.

Roland Argabioso, field operations division chief of the NBI, said it would take at least two days before they can take all the pieces of evidence from the warehouse.

The machines, he said, could be worth more than P400 million.

The seizure of the items was done in the presence of some barangay officials.

"It would really be difficult for us to remove the machines and other materials from here because there's just so many. The machines

are also big. We're not even finished with our inventory," Argabioso said.

Olivo Ramos, NBI-Laguna director, said the seizure of the items were covered by a warrant issued by Biñan Regional Trial Court Judge Maniano Rubia.

He said they will bring the confiscated machines to the NBI warehouse in Manila for safekeeping.

"We will present these items to the court once the hearing begins," Argabioso said.

Argabioso said the raid at the warehouse would cripple the operations of the syndicate involved in selling pirated discs in the country.

He said the machines could produce over 300,000 fake CDs and DVDs daily. Most of the items are delivered to several stalls in Quiapo, Manila, he said.

The NBI said it has already launched a follow-up operation to collar Willy Lao, the alleged financier of the facility at the Laguna International Industrial Park in Barangay Mamplasan here.

On Wednesday, around 30 heavily-armed NBI agents swooped down on the warehouse and arrested 13 Chinese nationals who were caught while operating the replicating machines.

The storage facility, registered to Bright Future Technologies, was the same establishment raided by the Calabarzon police and the Optical Media Board in April last year.

President Macapagal-Arroyo visited the area and led the inspection of the confiscated items after the first raid.

But its owners were able to resume operations after the court quashed the search warrant of the raiding team.



GIFT WRAP

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Army battalion chief probed for rape try

SHARIFF KABUNSUAN PROVINCE—An Army battalion commander is now under investigation by the 6th Infantry Division here after he was accused of attempted rape.

His supposed victim earlier filed a complaint against the officer, whose identity was being withheld pending determination of whether or not there was probable cause to charge him.

"This early the 6th ID, upon instructions from Maj. Gen. Nehemias Pajarito, has started independent investigation. Our commanding gener-

al is always concerned with protecting the image of the division unit as a peacekeeping arm of the AFP," Col. Julieto Ando, chief of the 6th ID's civil military office, said.

But Ando said even as the investigation has already started, they have yet to take possession of the complaint.

The complaint, which was filed last week before Maguindanao Prosecutor Rodolfo Yanson, said the alleged attempted rape occurred on Feb. 17.

The complainant said she was earlier invited by the officer to attend a

post-Valentine's party to be held at the battalion headquarters.

She said on Feb. 17, the official sent a soldier and fetched her from her home in Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.

She said she was brought to the battalion headquarters.

But upon reaching the headquarters, she found that no party was being held.

She said the officer, a colonel, forced her into his quarters, locked the doors and began his sexual advances. Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

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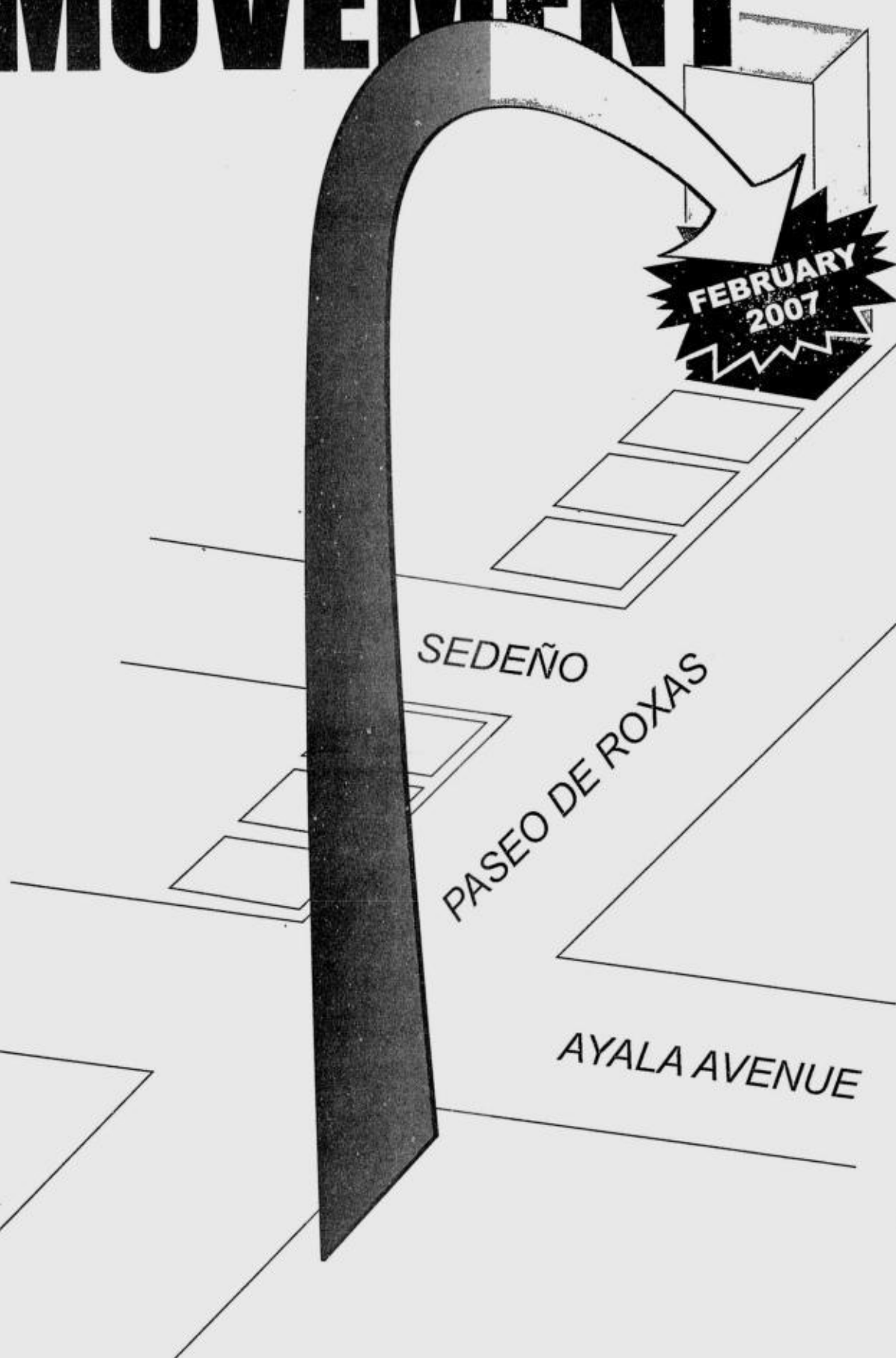
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INQUIRER *Mindanao*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nico A. Alconaba

Small village triumphs over floods, war



THE COMMUNITY is not spared from government and insurgents' clashes. Here, residents carry their ration to the evacuation site with the help of Bantay Ceasefire volunteers. PHOTOS BY MEDEL HERNANI/CONTRIBUTOR

By Germalina Lacorte
Pagagawan, Maguindanao

FOR NORMA GUIAMENDAL, 38, a simple act of planting corn in her community in Barangay Pagagawan's sitio of Punol in Pagagawan, Maguindanao, is a great gamble with nature.

"Each year, when heavy rains come, the Pulangi River swells and eats up a portion of our land," says Guiamendal. She recalls how the river used to be 400 meters away from her neighborhood and how worsening soil erosion

in recent years has brought the floodwaters so near that it had already gobbled up a mosque, a madrasah and a five-hectare mango plantation.

Punol is just one of the areas below the 1,700-ha Malitubog-Maridagao dam that gets flooded every time the dam overflows. The dam submerged five barangays when it was built a few years ago.

"Some of my neighbors were forced to transfer their houses away every time the water got near," Guiamendal says.

But every year, people continue to face the risk even as they organize themselves to fight the disasters. Four times in the last three years, the footbridge that Punol residents

built over the 40-m Pulangi River was carried away by rampaging waters. Four times, they have rebuilt it, Guiamendal recalls.

"After the flood, there's always something left from their crops," notes Vicenta Arances, Maguindanao area staff member of the non-government Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (Misfi). The foundation has been implementing the European Union-funded program in the area.

"But in some areas, there are times when everything is wiped out," Arances says.

In 2005, the EU-funded Community Disaster Response Center (CDRC) identified Punol as among the 62 disaster-prone areas in Mindanao that would initially benefit from its Aid to the Uprooted People Program (AUPP). The project primarily aims to bring back people who had been displaced by armed conflicts to their communities.

Natural disasters

"Although the program basically seeks to help internally displaced people take roots in their communities again, we discovered that aside from war, the displaced people are also battling natural disasters and other forms of calamities in their own communities," said Daday Sanchez, executive director of Misfi.

Flooding, after all, is just one of Punol's problems. About five kilometers away from the Davao-Cotabato highway, 2 km of which is totally inaccessible during heavy rains, the sitio lies on the usual battleground of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and government forces.

Punol leads to another Maguindanao barangay of Inug-og, the birthplace of MILF founder Salamat Hashim and considered a heartland of this faction of the Moro rebellion.

At the height of the MILF and government fighting in 2000 and 2003, Sitio Punol and Barangay Inug-og had been battle sites, while Barangays Layog and Tunggol along the highway were automatically turned into a tent city of evacuees seeking safe grounds.

Reduce vulnerability

Although Punol was one of the worst-hit by the war, it was never reached by relief assistance, Arances said.

The CDRC program seeks to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest and the most neglected people against disasters by increasing food sufficiency and strengthening people's livelihood, improving health and nutrition and introducing basic numbers and literacy skills, and most of all, increasing the community's readiness in times of disasters.

In July last year, the program shelled out part of the 1.18 million euros (P71 million) poured into 62 pilot barangays in Mindanao for the purchase of corn shellers and trailers in Punol.

The new facilities did not only reduce post-harvest cost and boost the income of village farmers. It also enabled the Punol Farmers Association (PFA) to earn enough and put up a small fund to address the most pressing needs of its members.

From last year's P17,000 earnings, the association was able to extend medical emergency loans, interest-free and payable up to the next harvest. Instead of waiting for government help, it was able to draw out some amount to help members affected by the recent floods.

When another flood hit this part of Maguindanao in October, the farmers' group bought seven sacks of rice as relief assistance to the victims.

Confidence

From such small efforts, the community started to regain the confidence that had been eroded by years of battling disasters. When the temporary footbridge was swept away by flood, the people set aside three days for "bayanihan" to rebuild the structure.

"By working together, we were able to restore confidence in ourselves, discovered self-reliance as a community," says Guiamendal.

She says the community was now planning to establish a multipurpose cooperative to sustain their initiatives.

The threat of a bigger flood, or even war, continues in this small village. But slowly and surely, people are learning to rely more on their collective strength to solve their problems rather than rely on government help.

The rampaging floodwaters that get bigger each year may still be beyond the community's capacity to solve. Arances says a seawall stretching for at least 2 km and costing millions of pesos is needed to protect them from disaster.



NORMA Guiamendal of Sitio Punol in Barangay Pagagawan holds up a bunch of eggplant harvests. Despite the calamities, people gamble each planting season hoping there's something left of the harvests at the end of the year.

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MOVING SPIRIT

Speaker Jose de Venecia speaks at the inaugural of the Inang Naulila sa Anak (Ina) at the DSWD compound at Batasan Hills, Quezon City. The rites marked the 2nd death anniversary of his daughter KC. The bereaved dad believed his daughter's spirit was touching him on the wings of a butterfly. (Right) President Arroyo joins the De Venecias (Gina is to her left) in celebrating the life of the De Venecia daughter, who perished in a fire at their Dasmariñas Village home.

Malacañang: Don't grandstand ...

From page A1

Initiated by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the rally has drawn the support of an array of evangelical groups, from Bro. Mike Velarde's El Shaddai and Bro. Ed Villanueva's Jesus is Lord movement to the Aglipayan Church, several Protestant sects and Muslims.

Opposition politicians, labor and student activists, professionals and other members of the civil society have signified their intention to attend.

The rally will be capped by a Mass celebrated by Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales.

This will be at least the third time in less than 10 years that Church leaders will be using their clout to mobilize a huge rally against what they believe to be unjustified efforts to change the Constitution.

In 1997, the late Cardinal Jaime Sin and former President Corazon Aquino led crowds at the Rizal Park estimated at 600,000 to oppose attempts to change the Charter which would have allowed then President Fidel Ramos to run for a second term. Ramos backed off.

In 1999, about 70,000 protesters led by Sin and Aquino held a protest rally in Makati City to oppose Cha-cha under then President Joseph Estrada.

Banners must go

At Taft, they will be told to fold up their banners because they will then be entering "an environment of prayer," Quitorio said in a television interview.

Church officials have said that the Quirino Grandstand would be reserved exclusively for Archbishop

op Rosales and others who would celebrate the Mass.

Other guests, including Bro. Mike, Bro. Eddie, and political figures, will be asked to stay with the rest of the crowd fronting the grandstand.

Church leaders had called the rally to protest administration moves to tinker with the Constitution and set up a parliamentary government under Ms Arroyo still in command.

Following Malacañang's and the House's retreat on the Con-ass issue, CBCP president and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo appeared to give the rally a new tack. He said the gathering would be a "prayer rally of thanksgiving."

Palace heard people

"We thank God because our leaders heard the voice of the people," he said. "We hope and pray both leaders and people will persevere in their common concern for the country."

CBCP officials said the rally would serve to remind the people to keep watchful and vigilant over important issues confronting the country. Hence, the rally's theme—Watch and Pray.

Lagdameo aired a plea for sobriety.

"People do not—should not—pray against each other; they must pray for each other," he said in a message posted in his own blog site (abplagdameo.blogspot.com).

Prayers answered

Lagdameo's message struck a more conciliatory note than some other bishops critical and suspicious of the Arroyo administration.

"God does not have enemies, only children. Whatever may be the people's place in the politi-

cal and social spectrum, they are above all citizens of the same country and children of God," the CBCP president added.

Lagdameo said the clergy and the ordinary faithful had been praying since the beginning of the political crisis sparked by administration's Cha-cha drive. He said the people's prayers for the abandonment of Cha-cha was granted even before today's rally.

"How God answered our prayers even before we directly addressed it to Him," he said. "God has heard our unarticulated prayer. He loves the Philippines. He has converted our crisis-laden situation into kairos, a moment of grace."

16,000 cops

The Philippine National Police has tripled to 16,000 the number of cops that would secure the rally. The Armed Forces of the Philippines has also readied nearly 3,000 troops to reinforce the police.

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said the policemen under Task Force Manila Shield would be deployed around Luneta. Checkpoints have also been put up in strategic areas, including the North and South Luzon Expressways.

"We have to double up to ensure that no explosive materials or firearms are brought in," Pagdilao said.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said he would muster about 2,000 other troops at the Camp Aguinaldo Grandstand where the soldiers will hold their own Mass.

"We will pray for the safety of our soldiers," Esperon said.

The AFP National Capital Re-

gion Command has placed on stand by another seven companies composed of at least 800 troops.

Esperon repeated his warning about possible saboteurs.

"We are tracking down a particular group that might try to create trouble. But I cannot discuss this now since this is purely an operational matter," he said.

Go, GMA

One top Catholic prelate attending today's gathering thinks it is time for the national leadership "to go."

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz said he hoped the popular uproar against Cha-cha would be, for the national leadership, a "hard and painful lesson that it is neither truly meant to govern nor really capable of good governance."

Another planet

"The logical conclusion is but one: It appears that the time has come for the national leadership to go, to renounce the office, to move somewhere, to leave everything behind," Cruz said in a statement posted in his blog site (ovc.blogspot.com).

Cruz may not be able to utter his views today as organizers have banned all political speeches.

The archbishop claims that the national leadership "continues to be accused of lying, cheating and stealing..."

He also said: "There must be another planet where those possessed and obsessed proponents of Cha-cha come from to preach that national abundance, progress and development are necessarily connected with a parliamentary form of government." With Dona Z. Pazzibugan and PDI Research

Don't force students to rally, Gonzalez tells priests

By Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez yesterday accused some priests of forcing students in Catholic schools to attend today's rally at the Quirino Grandstand.

Gonzalez also hit the Catholic Church hierarchy for allegedly wanting to set the government's political "agenda" and engaging in acts of destabilization.

"It is very clear that there are certain Church people deeply involved in destabilization," he said. "One church in Quezon City is being guarded by (renewed) soldiers. They are hiding lots of money there stashed in a concrete vault."

He did not identify the "Church people" or the church. In an interview with the IN-

QUIRER, Gonzalez also said the Church had even installed an escape door that runs through a subdivision to ensure that those plotting Ms Arroyo's ouster would not be caught.

Gonzalez said that he had received reports that students had been "influenced" to join today's rally.

"There will be lots of people because they force the children and students to go there. Ateneo, UST, La Salle and other girl schools are being strongly influenced by the priests and the school administrators," he said.

"I already had it investigated," he said.

Gonzalez said he had learned from insiders in the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines that today's rally did not have the "consent" of the whole CBCP hierarchy.

Luneta traffic rerouted

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT has drawn up a traffic rerouting plan to minimize traffic during today's rally at the Quirino Grandstand.

All vehicles coming from the northern part of Manila/Pier Zone will have to turn left to A. Soriano to their point of destinations.

On the other hand, all vehicles coming from the southern part of Manila intending to use the stretch of Roxas Boulevard will have to turn right on President Quirino Avenue to their point of destinations.

All vehicles coming from MacArthur, Jones and Quezon bridges will have to take Taft Avenue to their point of destinations.

All light vehicles coming both

from north and south of Manila will have to take Taft Avenue.

Closed to vehicular traffic will be the stretch of Roxas Boulevard, north and southbound from Anda Circle to President Quirino Avenue; the stretch of T.M. Kalaw (westbound) from Ma. Orosa to Roxas Boulevard, and the stretch of P. Burgos (west and eastbound) from Ma. Orosa to Roxas Boulevard.

Designated parking areas will have to turn right on Bonifacio Drive from P. Burgos to Anda Circle (northbound); the stretch of T.M. Kalaw from Ma. Orosa to Roxas Boulevard (westbound), and the stretch of P. Burgos from Katigbak to Ma. Orosa (east and westbound). Tina G. Santos

Solon, bodyguard shot dead at Mt. Carmel Church after wedding

From page A1

Drive, several streets away from the church.

Over ANC News, Bersamin's driver Allan Sawadan, also a policeman, said he engaged the gunmen in a shootout. Sawadan was hit in the leg.

Police investigators said that a 13-year-old watch-your-car boy was also hit in the crossfire, and that the boy was taken to an undisclosed hospital.

Justice Lucas Bersamin, the lawmaker's younger brother, declined a TV crew's request for comment.

Bersamin's murder came more than a month after a relative, Abra provincial board member James Bersamin, 66, was shot dead in the capital Bangued.

James Bersamin was the third ranking official from Abra to be assassinated this year. La Paz Mayor Mar Ysrael Bernos was killed at the town plaza on Jan. 13.

Family members said the lawmaker had just stood as a sponsor at the marriage of his niece Pia, daughter of Justice Bersamin, to Niño Embuscado and was on his way to the reception when he was gunned down at around 5:25 p.m.

"It was the recession and ev-

eryone was going out of the church when we heard gunshots," said Alvin Salonga, a guest at the wedding.

"We then saw [the gunmen] running. There were two of them. They escaped on board a motorcycle," he said.

Salonga said the gunmen were armed with pistols and waited at the gate of the church compound.

Camouflage pants

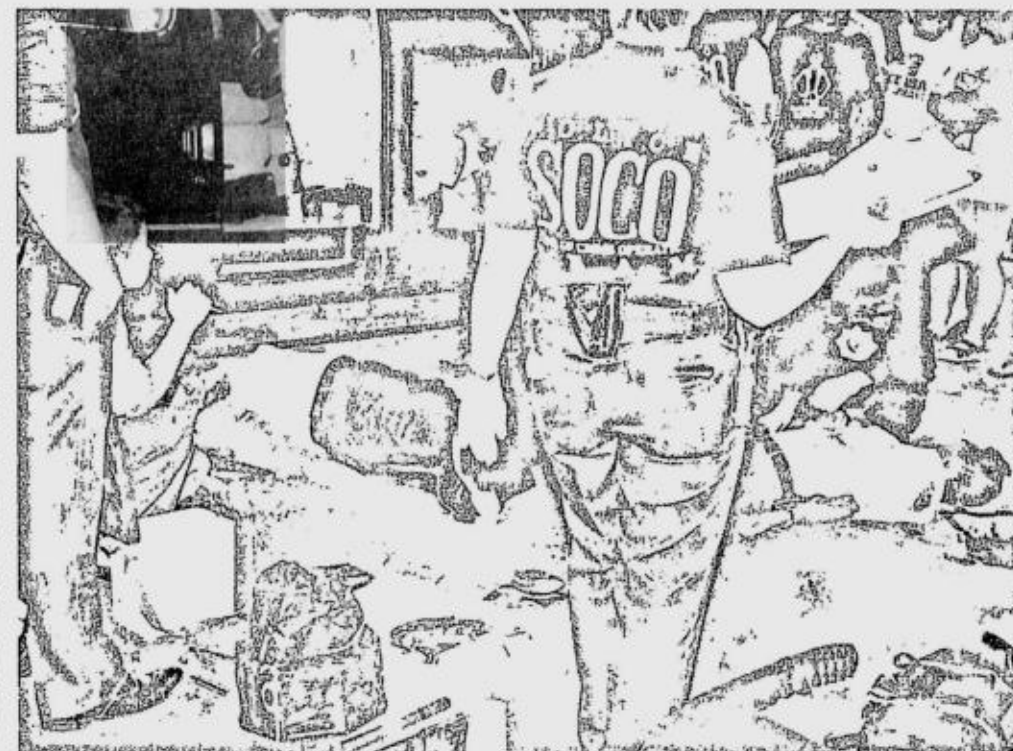
He said Bersamin's driver tried to go after the gunmen and fired shots at them. He added that it took the police some time to arrive, and that by then, the lawmaker was dead.

"[The two] bodies are still sprawled on the ground. I think [Bersamin] was shot in the head. We can't go near the bodies because the police had cordoned off the area," Salonga said.

Salonga said he had noticed nothing suspicious before the wedding except for a man who was loitering inside the church dressed in a white shirt and camouflage pants.

"The guard scolded him for his attire because it was a formal event. But I did not give it much thought," Salonga said.

Bersamin was serving his second term after being elected to Congress for the first time in



IS NOTHING SACRED ANYMORE? Scene of crime investigators at the Mt. Carmel Church compound in New Manila check out Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. (left) and his bodyguard SPO1 Adelfo Ortega sprawled on the ground after being gunned down in cold blood. The congressman stood as sponsor at his niece's wedding

2001 as representative of the lone district of Abra. Before then, he served as vice governor of the province from 1998 to 2001 and

mayor of his native Bangued from 1987 to 1998.

Sought for comment, Speaker Jose de Venecia said: "I strongly

condemn the attack and ask police authorities to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation, and identify the perpetra-

tors and the motive behind the killing."

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio also deplored the attack. He said he was "shocked and outraged by this gruesome, cold-blooded murder."

"Government will leave no stone unturned to bring the godless perpetrators to justice," Claudio said in a statement.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon ordered the creation of a task force to go after the killers.

Bersamin had served as vice chair of the House committees on dangerous drugs and on trade and industry.

He was a member of the committees on agriculture and food, on appropriations, and on national defense and security.

Prior to his stint in the public sector, Bersamin worked at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. from 1968 to 1977 and Allied Bank from 1977 to 1985.

He was a Rotary Club member since 1985.

He held degrees in psychology and commerce from the University of Santo Tomas and the University of the East, respectively. He also took a postgraduate course at the Ateneo Business School. With reports from AP and Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research

DA assures lots of chicken for Christmas

By Norman Bordadora

THERE WILL BE AN AMPLE SUPPLY of chicken at affordable prices over the holidays, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap assured consumers yesterday.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has approved the importation of almost three million kilos of chicken—a Filipino Christmas dinner staple—from bird flu-free countries such as the United States and Canada.

“Our cold storage warehouses contain enough stocks and are regularly replenished. The DA will be regularly monitoring the situation in our retail markets to ensure that the supply and prices of chicken remain stable this holiday season,” Yap said at the weekly Kapihan sa Sulok news forum in Quezon City.

Yap said the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. and the United Broilers' Raisers Association have reported that their import shipments started arriving in the third week of November and would continue to arrive until the last week of December.

The secretary said chicken shipments could reach 2.89 million kilos before Christmas Day.

The imports are meant to make up for chicken supply losses incurred in September when Super typhoon “Milenyo” hit Luzon and damaged poultry stock equivalent to 2,969 metric tons.

Records of the Bureau of Agricultural showed that the prices of frozen chicken in Metro Manila supermarkets were now as low as P98 per kilo, and P110 at the wet markets.

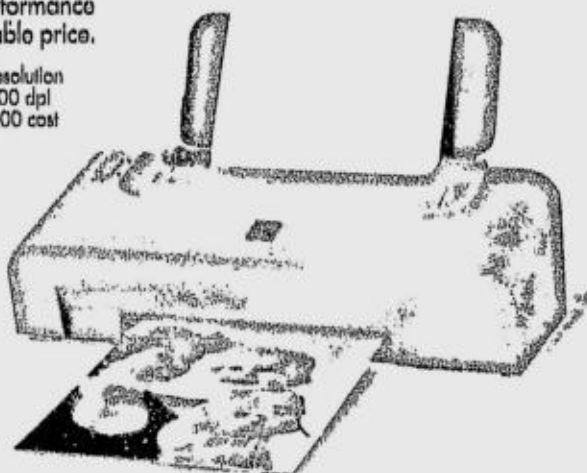


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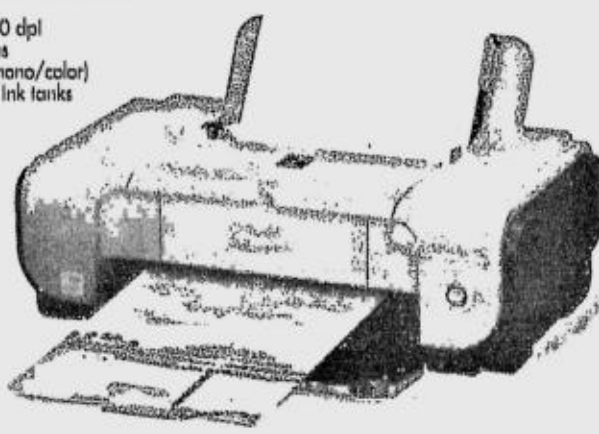
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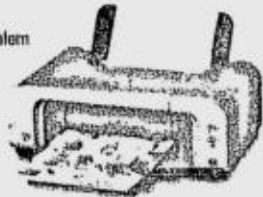
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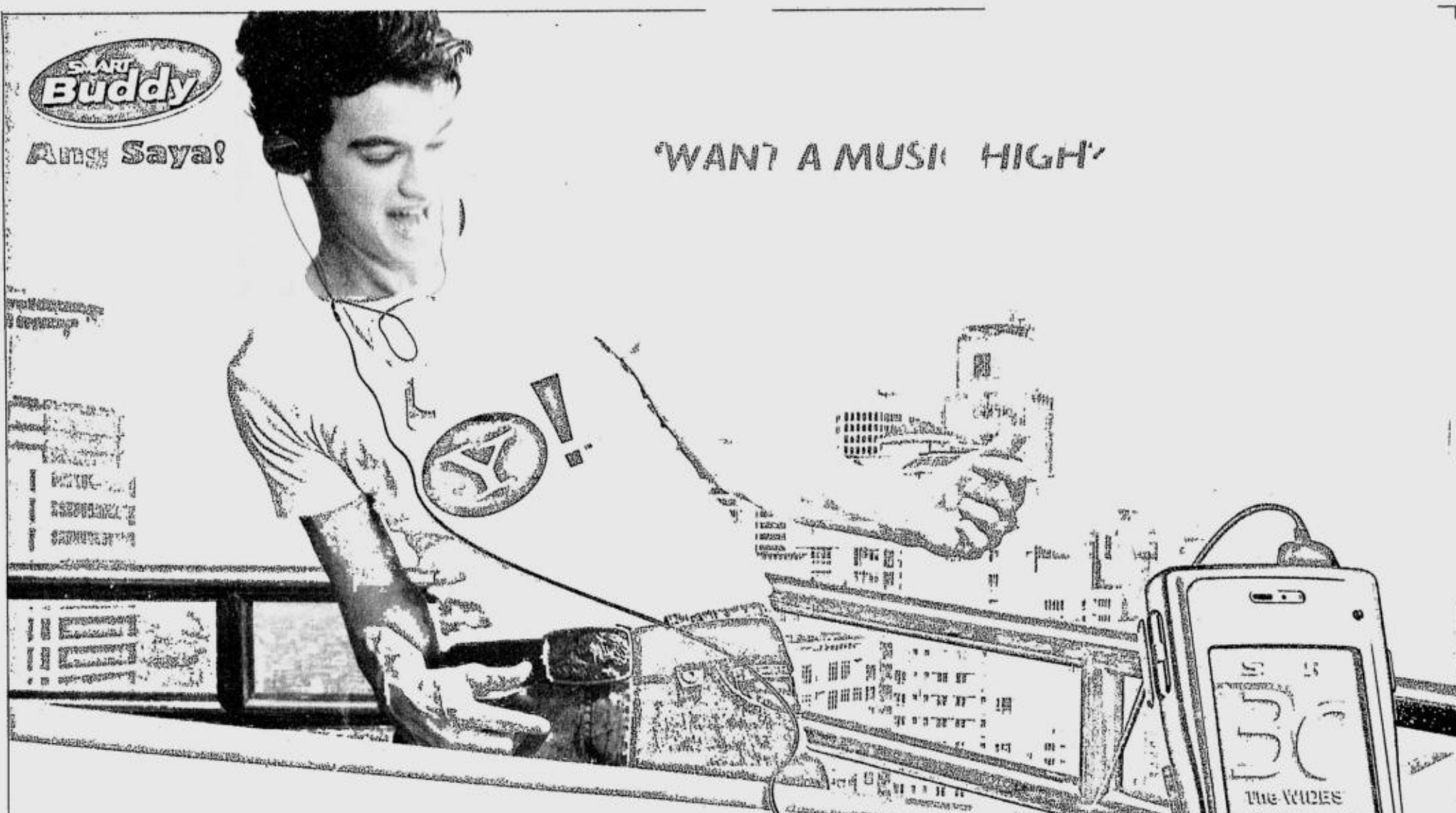


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Music offers ray of hope to Quiapo's sampaguita vendors

By Tina G. Santos

DURING THE HOLIDAYS, MANY STREET-children and *sampaguita* vendors around the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene (Quiapo Church) go around singing Christmas carols in the busy neighborhood.

But this year, some of them decided they would spread Christmas cheer by singing at the traditional *Misa de Gallo* instead.

Joy Ann Mejia, 14, has an angelic voice that delights churchgoers when she sings during weekend Masses and celebrations at the church.

"I sing at the church when I'm not selling flowers or when I don't have classes," Mejia, a second year student at the Claro M. Recto High School, said in Filipino.

"I feel blessed (when) I sing for Him," she added. "I notice that many people buy my *sampaguita* after Mass when I join the choir."

For the past several months, Mejia, along with three other *sampaguita* vendors her age, have sung with the Blessed Margaret de Castello (BMDC) choir, one of seven devotees of the Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno in the church.

The BMDC choir is an all-male group of former vagrants and beggars.

"We usually don't mix girls and boys in a choir. But these girls said they would really love to sing during Mass. So sometimes, we call the group 'BMDC and the Children's Choir,'" said Bro. Eddie Egera, choir coordinator.

Feeding program beneficiaries

He said choir members were among the beneficiaries of the parish's feeding program that distributes free *lugaw* three times a day every day to street people, stranded job seekers, and even poor Quiapo residents.

Duped by a recruiter who promised him a job in the city, Danny Habong, 30, a native of Pampanga, wandered for several days in the area. "I was hungry, I had no money and I had nowhere to go so I asked Brother Eddie for help. He offered me work as a parish volunteer and eventually, as a member of the choir," he said.

Named after a blind hunchback Italian girl who kept company with beggars and outcasts after being abandoned by her parents, the Blessed Margaret de Castello choir was formed two years ago by then newly-installed parish priest Msgr. Josefine "Pepe" Ramirez.

Egera said some members of the choir came from a group of the same name that Ramirez founded in San Lorenzo Ruiz in Binondo where he served before moving to Quiapo.

"Members of the first BMDC choir were beggars and street people that Monsignor Ramirez used to feed when he was parish priest of Binondo. He's just continuing what he has been doing for several years," Egera said.

Empowering the poor

Empowerment of the poor was the parish's overriding concern, he added. "Perhaps because of the growing congestion in his parish, and because most of his parishioners are among the less privileged, Monsignor Ramirez has focused on attending to their needs," Egera said.

Clarito Topacio, 13, the choir's youngest member, said joining the choir was the best thing that happened to him.

Apart from the allowance of P150 a week that each member gets, Topacio was also able to go back to school with the help of the parish. The sixth in a brood of 10, he said his parents could no longer support him because of poverty.

Every morning on weekends, Topacio sings during the Mass and, in the afternoon, sells *sampaguita* in front of the church to help his family.

The best benefit of being a choir member, however, has been the improvement in their self-esteem. "After a while, you could see how their grooming has changed. The way they carry themselves now is also different—how they walk, how they dress. They now exude confidence," Egera observed, saying he and other parish workers also teach choir members good grooming and proper manners.

Minor problem

Though there was a minor problem with discipline at first, that was soon resolved, Egera added. "I believe all our hard work has paid off because our group is usually cited when we perform," he proudly said.

Apart from the usual Mass songs, the choir is often applauded when it sings "Gabay ng Buhay," a song about rising from poverty.

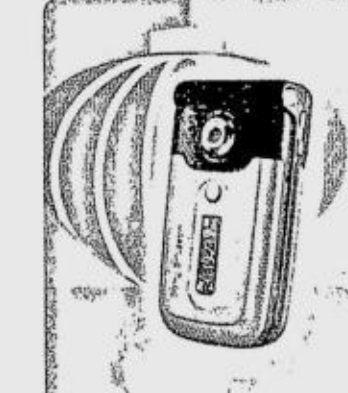
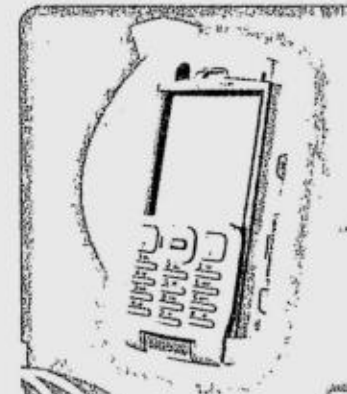
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QUIAPO Church officials are also forming a rondalla, whose members include children who live on the streets or sell flowers for a living.

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Taking a gamble on poor students, UP shows off winners' harvest

By DJ Yap

THERE WERE 450 OF THEM: wide-eyed lads and lasses from the barrios with little money in their pockets and virtually no prospects for the future.

That is, until the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City took a gamble on them and gave them free access to top-caliber education through the Experimental Democratization Scholarship (XDS) Program.

Today, three decades later, many of them are stars in their own success stories—as professors, lawyers, engineers, doctors, architects and businessmen.

Living proof

In the light of a controversial proposal to raise UP's tuition threefold, many graduates of the XDS program are living proof that it takes only a little generosity to save poor but smart students from a life of poverty.

Victor Isidro, the son of a low-salaried postman and a housewife, is the youngest in a brood of nine.

He became one of the first beneficiaries of XDS, which the university implemented from 1977 to 1981 to help correct an imbalance in student enrollment that favored the more affluent.

The university shouldered the full cost of Isidro's studies in geodetic engineering, including tuition, board and lodging at university dormitories, books, transportation, and learning assistance materials.

Back then, the gap between rich and poor students at UP was particularly marked, recalled Isidro.

"We were 'promdi' and everybody knew it, from our *barong* and sandals to the six-inch dictionaries we all lugged around because we thought we were required to, since UP gave these to us," he said.

Despite sarcastic remarks thrown their way, Isidro and his fellow XDS were undaunted. They attended classes with pride in being part of the country's premier state university.

In a sense, the "promdi" label brought the XDS grantees closer, he said. "We banded together and went to classes together. Our bonding was special because some of us felt we were ostracized."

The special bond was revived recently when some grantees formed an Internet group seeking to reconnect all former XDS students.

In less than a year, more than a hundred had joined the e-group, through which they updated each

other on their lives since leaving Diliman.

Success stories

The information they got gave them new reason to feel proud. The group, in a press account, gave a sampling of XDS success stories:

"An accountancy graduate is now the senior vice president of the finance department of Nestle Philippines, while an economics alumna is director for economic affairs at the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Canberra.

"An industrial engineering (IE) alumna is now a manager of Pfizer in New York, while another IE alumnus is now employed in the United Nations System as coordinator (based on) his investment banking experience in the Philippines and overseas.

"An XDS alumnus joined recently the United States Agency for International Development after years of management experience in the pharmaceuticals industry. The Asian Development Bank also has an XDS alumnus in its roster.

Today, members of XDS will meet again after almost 30 years for the "Gabi ng Parangal at Pasasalamat" to honor their mentors. The event will be held 6 p.m.

VICTOR Isidro (top row, second from right) and other beneficiaries of the Experimental Democratization Scholarship program of the University of the Philippines want to put up a scholarship for poor students as their way of repaying the university.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



to 10 p.m. at the Bahay ng Alumnus in UP Diliman.

"We do not expect that all the 450 or so grantees have inspirational stories to tell," members of the e-group said in a statement.

Multiplier effects

"However, based on the stories in the e-group, it appears that the university had won its bet," they added. "The experimental program benefited not just 450 individuals. Truly, the benefits had multiplier effects in that many of us were able to send siblings and other relatives to college."

"Instead of (just) raising families (from below) the poverty line, we, and our siblings, are

now raising families that have better chances in the future," they said.

As for Isidro, he is now married and the father of a teenage girl. After graduation, he pursued a Master's degree in public management at the Development Academy of the Philippines.

He now teaches at the graduate school of the National College of Business and Arts and the University of Makati.

What might have been

Isidro shudders when he thinks what his life would have been like were it not for the opportunity the university gave him.

"In our talks, some of us were

saying we might be on the streets begging, or even mugging people, if not for XDS. Personally, I think I would have survived, but life would have been harder," he said.

Isidro said he and his fellow XDS alumnus intend to offer a scholarship for an indigent student, especially someone from the province.

"We're in the process of raising funds, but we hope to sponsor at least one student next school year," he said. It was their small way of paying back what they owed UP. "Most of us feel it's about time that we gave something back to the university," Isidro said.



FORMER vagrants and beggars make up the all-male Blessed Margaret de Castello choir.

Music offers . . .

From page A21

"They seem to sing it from the heart, perhaps because they can relate to the meaning of the song," Egera added. "Most often than not, churchgoers become teary-eyed when they hear the choir sing it."

To date, the BMDC choir sings at the 10 a.m. Mass everyday. It has also performed in the provinces, or wherever Ramirez is invited to say Mass.

Egera said the parish was now organizing a rondalla that would eventually accompany the choirs during Masses.

Project coordinator Noel Tandog

said the rondalla would be composed of young sampaguita vendors in front of the church.

"Street children, including flower vendors and those living around the church's immediate community, will be trained to be professional rondalla players so they can be hired to play in special occasions like fiestas to earn extra income," Tandog said.

But he said the rondalla was preparing for a major event next month, the Black Nazarene's fourth centenary.

"It will be a grand celebration. It will be exactly 400 years since the image was brought to the Philippines

from Mexico by the first group of Augustinian Recollect missionaries that landed in Manila," Tandog said.

The rondalla will be composed of 22 children aged 12 to 14 years, including eight sampaguita vendors.

Mejia, who is also a member of the group, said she was looking forward to playing the *bandurria*.

"It's a new experience for me and I'm very excited," Mejia said.

But before the big event, she and the rest of the choir are gearing up for more activities this Christmas, including singing at the *Simbang Gabi* and caroling in the community and neighboring parishes.

Christmas' Sweet Refrain

During Christmas season, everyone seems to be involved in spirit-filled activities. Many of us prepare early for church and end the day really late to finish a lengthy shopping list of gifts and food items for all sorts of gatherings here and there.

The extraordinarily busy behavior of the season may pose a risk to people with heart disease and diabetes. The added stress can push their health to the limit on top of an array of fatty foods and sweets, from which they are advised to refrain. Perhaps unknown to many, people with diabetes are more prone to suffer cardiovascular disease such as stroke, heart attack and peripheral vascular disease (disease of the arteries in the arms or legs). For the people with diabetes, their heart disease tends to be more severe and their heart attack more fatal. The reason behind this is that patients with diabetes have lower HDL (good cholesterol), and tend to have higher LDL (bad cholesterol) levels. Triglycerides or blood fat levels that come from fatty foods and which can cause coronary artery disease at high levels are usually elevated among patients with diabetes.

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Traffic chief axed

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR LI-to Atienza has dismissed the Manila Police District's Traffic Enforcement Office chief over the proliferation of illegal terminals and his failure to implement order in the city's streets.

Supt. Roberto dela Rosa was replaced by Supt. Elmer Jamias, who officially took over the post Friday.

"I've been receiving mounting complaints and I've repeatedly reminded him (Dela Rosa) of these," Atienza said. "I've given him full control of the civilian traffic aides, I've been very supportive and understanding of him but he seems to be helpless."

The mayor said he has instructed Jamias to clean up traffic, particularly in busy areas during the Christmas season.

Last month, Atienza dismissed 62 traffic enforcers who were under Dela Rosa's supervision after they were found remiss in their duties.

"We don't need them, they were not doing their job properly," Atienza earlier said, explaining that he had to take action because of various complaints from motorists.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Tensions stir fear of Palestinian civil war

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK—PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Abbas may threaten to call early elections on Saturday in a much anticipated speech after violence between his Fatah group and the ruling Hamas stirred fears of civil war.

Internal tensions are at their worst in a decade after months of talks between the Hamas Islamists and Fatah on forging a unity government foundered, dashing Palestinian hopes that an end to crippling Western sanctions could be in sight.

Aides to Abbas said they expected him to say in his speech that he would allow one more attempt at forming a new government of technocrats, and that if that failed, he would call fresh parliamentary and presidential elections.

"In my opinion, Abbas is faced

with a continuation of the bullets or going back to the ballots. I think Abbas has chosen the ballots," Saeb Erekat, a senior Abbas aide, said.

Abbas's forces wounded 32 Hamas supporters in Ramallah on Friday when they fired on protesters. Gunbattles between the factions also erupted in Gaza.

There were no early reports of clashes on Saturday.

Hamas, which surprised Fatah to win parliamentary elections in January, has said it would regard any call for fresh elections as a coup. Abbas was elected separately in early

2005 in a presidential poll that Hamas did not contest.

Khalil al-Hayya, the head of Hamas's faction in parliament, said on Friday that Hamas would not agree to an early election or a referendum on the issue. He did not say what action Hamas would take if Abbas called new elections.

The Palestinian basic law, which acts as a constitution, has no provision for calling early elections.

Fatah officials say Abbas can do this by issuing a presidential decree. Hamas contends it would be illegal.

Some analysts have questioned

whether Abbas would make a bold announcement of this sort at a time when emotions are running at fever pitch.

"He will threaten to hold early elections or a referendum but I do not think he is suicidal," political analyst Basem Zubeideh was quoted as saying in the daily Palestine Times.

Abbas has hinted at decisive steps such as sacking the government, but has so far acted with caution.

Hamas has led the government since March but has largely been unable to govern because of the

Western sanctions and Israel's withholding of vital tax transfers.

The measures were imposed because of Hamas's refusal to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told Reuters she would ask Congress for tens of millions of dollars to strengthen Abbas's security forces. Washington wants to ensure Abbas emerges victorious in any power struggle with Hamas.

Israel and the United States regard Hamas as a terrorist group and would be happy to see the Hamas government fall. *Reuters*

UK police say they're closing in on strangler

IPSWICH, ENGLAND—POLICE in Britain hunting a killer dubbed the "Suffolk Strangler" after the deaths of five prostitutes are focusing on five key suspects, media reports said Saturday.

Detectives want to talk to a taxi driver, a businessman and a man with a liking for outdoor sex, all of whom were clients of Tania Nicol, one of the dead prostitutes, the Sun newspaper reported.

They are increasingly confident that they are closing in on the killer terrorizing the sleepy town of Ipswich, in eastern England, after the discovery of five bodies in ten days, according to the Times.

The victims have been confirmed as Nicol, 19; Gemma Adams, 25; Anneli Alderton, 24; Paula Clennell, also 24; and Annette Nicholls, 29.

Cause of death has only been established in two of the cases—Clennell died of "compression to the neck," while Alderton was strangled.

The focus of the inquiry has "narrowed significantly," the Times's source said.

Police think it is "very significant" that none of the women's bodies show signs of a struggle and that none was sexually assaulted before being killed, the Times reported.

Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull, heading the probe, said Friday that his team was making "good progress." He said police were "looking at a number of interesting people" but admitted they did not have any suspects.

Ipswich's streets were again virtually deserted Friday night, despite Christmas parties being in full swing elsewhere in the UK, as the market town lives in fear of more deaths.

Police and local drug workers are paying prostitutes to stay off the streets with money being provided by an unidentified charity.

Many have compared the killings to those committed by the notorious Jack the Ripper, who murdered five east London prostitutes in 1888, and Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe, responsible for the deaths of 13 women between 1975 and 1980. *AFP*



A PICTURE, showing the five prostitutes killed in Suffolk in the last two weeks, is displayed at a candlelit prayer service on Dec. 15, held for Gemma Adams, Tania Nicol, Anneli Alderton, Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls, at St. Peter's church, in Copdock. More than 100 people gathered to light candles in memory of the women. *AFP*

WORLD BRIEFS

Nepal parties, rebels charter

KATMANDU—Nepal's ruling alliance and Maoist rebels on Saturday approved the draft of an interim constitution, a key step to implement their landmark peace deal ending a conflict which has killed thousands, negotiators said. The document, an interim law that paves the way for Maoists to join a provisional parliament and government, was signed by top leaders of the alliance including Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and the Maoist rebel leader Prachanda. "This is yet another major achievement for the establishment of peace in Nepal," said Bharat Mohan Adhikary, a senior leader of the Communist-UML party, the second biggest group in the seven-party coalition. "The prime minister will carry out the work of the head of state and the king will have no right in state affairs," Adhikary told reporters. There was no immediate comment from the king, who has already lost most of his powers after he was forced to restore democracy in April following weeks of mass street protests against him. Analysts said the beleaguered monarch had no choice but to accept the decision. *Reuters*

Russian minister discredits Litvinenko

MOSCOW—Alexander Litvinenko, the former agent murdered in London last month, was an ex-prison guard of such poor character that he was fired from Russia's security agency when it was run by now-president Vladimir Putin, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said. Litvinenko's slow, agonizing death from radiation poisoning in London last month prompted an international police investigation after the former agent accused Putin of his murder, an accusation the Kremlin dismissed as "nonsense." Ivanov, in rare comments by a top Russian official on the case, said Litvinenko never had access to important information. "He was never a spy and never knew anything of any real value to give to any (foreign intelligence) service," Ivanov told foreign correspondents at a dinner late on Friday. *Reuters*

Lethal injection halted in Calif., Florida

SAN FRANCISCO—Botched executions in California and Florida that required more than 30 minutes to kill condemned prisoners prompted a moratorium on the lethal injection procedure in both states on Friday. Federal Judge Jeremy Fogel found California's method of execution unconstitutional, concluding its "implementation of lethal injection is broken, but it can be fixed." The decision follows the state's 2005 execution in which guards failed to connect a back-up intravenous line to Stanley "Tookie" Williams, the former Crips gang leader who garnered global publicity after writing anti-gang books. Then on Wednesday Florida executioners botched the insertion of needles into condemned killer Angel Diaz, which meant lethal chemicals did not go directly into his veins, according to the state's medical examiner. Death penalty opponents have for years argued that lethal injection is cruel and unusual punishment barred by the US Constitution, but only such recent instances have given legal and political traction to their arguments. *Reuters*

More Japanese teachers depressed

TOKYO—A record number of teachers at Japanese public schools took leave for depression or other mental health problems in the year to March, an Education Ministry survey showed. The figure, at 4,178, was triple what it was 10 years ago and comes as pressure mounts on education authorities to resolve problems such as bullying and excessive stress due to rote learning. Japan enacted a law on Friday aimed at injecting more patriotism and discipline into schools but critics say it would do little to fix such problems. A ministry official attributed the survey's findings to teachers suffering from heavier workloads and difficulties in relationships with colleagues and students' parents, Kyodo news agency said. *Reuters*

US senator's progress 'encouraging' after surgery

WASHINGTON—A DEMOCRATIC senator whose sudden brain hemorrhage jeopardized his party's majority in the Senate is showing encouraging signs of recovery, his doctors said. He is to remain hospitalized until post-surgery swelling in his brain goes down.

Senator Tim Johnson remained in critical but stable condition Friday, just short of three weeks before the new Senate is to convene with his party holding control by a single vote. The South Dakota Democrat

suffered a brain hemorrhage Wednesday.

The timing of his return is uncertain, but Democrats would still be in control of the Senate if his recovery period extends into the new session.

If Johnson were to leave office, South Dakota's Republican Governor Mike Rounds would be charged with appointing a replacement to finish his term, which ends in 2008. A Republican appointee would create a 50-50 tie and effectively allow the Republicans to retain Senate

control because the vice president—Dick Cheney—casts the tie-breaking vote.

Johnson's surgery has been described as successful, relieving pressure on the 59-year-old senator's brain and stopping the bleeding.

"Considering his initial presentation, his progress is encouraging," Dr. Anthony Caputy, chair of the George Washington University Hospital department of neurosurgery, said.

As a precaution, physicians placed a removable MRI-compatible

filter in Johnson's vena cava, a large vein leading into his heart, to reduce the risk of a blood clot going to his lungs, said Dr. Anthony Venbrux.

The senator was rushed to the hospital at midday Wednesday after becoming disoriented and stumbling during a conference call with reporters. He was diagnosed with arteriovenous malformation, or AVM, a condition that causes arteries and veins to grow abnormally large, become tangled and sometimes burst. The condition often is present from birth. *AP*

US: 'Sex worker' is wrong tag

WASHINGTON—PROSTITUTES ARE USUALLY termed sex workers by governments and social welfare groups to avoid demeaning them but the United States feels the switch unwittingly dignifies syndicates involved in the flesh trade.

The State Department's office combating human trafficking issued a directive Friday to US agencies urging them to avoid using terms "sex worker" or "child sex worker" and even advised governments not to use them.

"Of course, one can rationalize words such as 'sex worker' and 'child sex worker' in an effort to avoid a demeaning label such as 'prostitute,'" said John Miller, the office's director.

"However, there are other substitutes such as 'women used in prostitution' or 'sexually exploited children' that are neither pejorative nor pretend that violence to women and children is 'work,'" said Miller, who retired Friday

after campaigning extensively across the globe to stem the human trafficking problem.

During his four years on the job, the lanky former legislator has visited more than 50 countries and met more than 1,000 survivors of what he called "modern-day slavery."

Some 800,000 women, children and men are trafficked across national boundaries each year, most of whom are enslaved in the sex industry, the State Department says.

Miller said language was an important tool in fighting human trafficking.

"In earlier centuries to avoid facing up to the suffering of slaves, words such as 'house-boy,' 'field hand,' and 'servant' were used.

"Today, words such as 'forced laborer,' 'sex worker,' 'child soldier,' and 'child sex worker' are commonly used," he said.

These words, he said, required scrutiny. *AFP*

75 dirty Rio cops arrested

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil—Brazilian federal agents arrested 75 state police troopers on Friday for links with organized crime in Rio de Janeiro state's high-profile bid to get rid of corrupt cops.

A special federal police unit from the capital, Brasilia, and other cities arrived in Rio to make the arrests jointly with the state police internal investigations department.

In the early hours on Friday, they raided a shantytown on the outskirts of Rio where some of the officers accused of involvement in drug and arms trafficking lived. Many others were arrested at their police stations.

"We have to applaud this operation. It has a great symbolic value. By nabbing so many, police send a message to the force that they are being serious," said Julita Lemgruber, director of the Center for Security and Citizenship Studies at Rio de Janeiro's Candido Mendes University. *Reuters*

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Rosales relishes 'winning feeling' as Asia moves up

By Jong Arcano

SINGAPORE—IT'S BEEN QUITE A while and if only for a moment, Jennifer Rosales was able to savor that "winning feeling" she's been looking for all year.

"I certainly miss it bad," Rosales told the Inquirer after working out a solid victory with Taiwanese Candie Kung in the fourballs yesterday which helped Team Asia surge to a 7-5 lead over the International side in the Lexus Cup at the Tanah Merah Country Club course here.

When everyday in her 2006 campaign became a frustrating day for the fashion icon of the LPGA Tour, there was reason for a little joy as she and Kung beat Brittany Lincicome and Nikki Campbell, 3&1.

She was in high spirits, exchanging high fives with captain Grace Park and her Asian teammates as soon as the

day was over and gladly signed autographs for fans.

This Lexus Cup might just trigger something positive for Rosales who needs every bit of a confidence booster after her career hit rock-bottom due to a hurting wrist and a swing change that seems to be taking too long to bear fruit.

"I've come to accept that it's going to be a long process and there's going to be a lot of frustrations along the way," said Rosales, who didn't even make it to the Top 100 of the LPGA Order of Merit this year.

Her swing transformation takes a crucial test today when she goes up against American Sheri Steinhauer, the reigning British Women's Open champion, in one of the 12 singles matches capping this Ryder Cup-style competition among the best female players in the world.

With the Internationals in a com-

pletely different situation (they led 8-4 on Day 2 on the way to a 16-8 victory last year), their captain Annika Sorenstam said: "We have to make up some ground tomorrow and the sooner it can will be better for us. I have work to do."

Sorenstam paired with Natalie Gulbis to clinch one of only two wins her team earned, the other provided by

Paula Creamer and Stacy Prammanasudh.

Seon Hwa Lee and Se Ri Pak, Sakura Yokomine and Young Kim and Grace Park and Hee Won Han also hacked out victories for the Korean-laden Asian team.

Each member of the winning team will receive \$50,000 while the losing side will get \$30,000 per player.



JENNY Rosales: Swing change taking too long to bear fruit.

JANI KURTELJUS

CDO readies welcome for boxer Payla

By Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A WARM WELCOME awaits Asian Games gold medalist Violito Payla when he returns here from his victorious stint in Doha, Qatar.

Cagayan De Oro City Mayor Vicente Emano and his council have passed a resolution citing Payla's outstanding achievements following his impressive win over Thailand's Somjit Jongjohor.

Emano has called Payla's feat as a "source of hope and inspiration for amateur boxers for Cagayan De Oro and Misamis Oriental," even as Governor Oscar Moreno also said Payla would be honored along with Genebert Basadre, bronze medalist.

"Payla is a product of the city's amateur program. And we are very proud of his feat," said GAB-Cagayan's Vic Cabalog, who now heads the newly opened GAB satellite office in Zamboanga.

Payla, who hails from Malanang, Opol, Misamis Oriental, is a protégé of Brgy. 6 chair Mario Eronico. The 27-year-old Payla is a product of the 'Boxing at the Park' program of the city.

Opo Mayor Dixon Yasay is reportedly planning to hold a parade for Payla.

Meanwhile, Michael Payla, Violito's younger brother, made a successful pro debut by stopping Bohol's Romano Gelig in the third round on Friday evening.

Porras clinches lightweight title

By Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—KIDAPAWAN'S Arnel Porras dethroned Dexter Delada as RP lightweight champion Friday evening, stopping Delada in the second of a scheduled 12-round headlining an 8-bout card here.

Delada, cut over his left eyelid by a headbutt in the opening round, went down twice in the second stanza, forcing referee Dodong Galarpe to call a halt to the fight at 2:12 of the round.

Porras, who had campaigned extensively in Australia prior to the bout, started strong in the opening round, chasing Delada around. When the two butted heads, Delada was cut on his left eyelid, and a point was deducted from Porras.

Porras continued his assault in the second round, as Delada, visibly bothered by the cut, seemed slow and sluggish in parrying the challenger's attacks.

Delada, however, indicated that he wanted to get a return bout, confident to get one as his manager Rex "Wakee" Salud holds an option to Porras' next fight.

Porras, for his part, wants to campaign in the United States, according to his manager Jemmel Contayoso.

On the undercard, Bogie Delada wowed the crowd with a second round stoppage of Bohol's Isidro Balabat.

Jaidee ahead by 2; Miñoza climbs to 5th

By Musong R. Castillo

TOP LOCAL HOPE THONGCHAI Jaidee fired a three-under-par 69 yesterday to pad his Volvo Asian Masters golf lead by two even as Filipino Frankie Miñoza moved up to solo fifth spot after a 68, just three strokes off heading into the final round of the season-ending Asian Tour event.

Jaidee now has a 205 total, two

strokes ahead of countrymen Prayad Marksaeng (68) and Thaworn Wiratchant (70) and Malaysia's Iain Steel (66) at the Thai Country Club for 207 tallies.

But it was Miñoza, the former Japanese Tour campaigner, who continued to make a move, gaining on Jaidee after shooting a 31 on the backside built around five birdies.

Miñoza, who shot an eagle-aided 64

in the second round, had two bogeys, a birdie and six pars coming out before shooting three straight birds from the 11th and getting shots back on Nos. 14 and 16.

Angelo Que rose to a share of 19th spot after a 70, his second straight sub-par round, for 213, eight shots off but definitely in prime position for a great finish.

Juvic Pagunsan, the best-placed Fil-

ipino after Thursday's opening round, stumbled with a second straight 75 and dropped to joint 51st with a 222, definitely out of the running.

Prom Meesawat and Asian No. 1 Jeev Milkha Singh shot identical 72s to share sixth spot with four others at 210, five behind the red-hot Jaidee, the former paratrooper who took up the game at a late age but made the quick jump as the Thai No. 1.

Pacquiao turns 28, opens RP amateur boxfest



GENERAL SANTOS CITY—TWO HUNDRED boxers will show their wares starting today at the opening of the first Manny Pacquiao National Amateur Boxing tournament at the Oval Plaza Covered Court here.

Seeing action are young fighters from Mandaluyong City, Iloilo, Bacolod, Zamboanga, Cebu, Malaybalay, Panabo, Camiguin Province, Davao City, Digos, North Cotabato, Tulunan, South Cotabato, Koronadal, Sarangani Province, Jose

Abad Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Metro Davao and host General Santos City.

"Two boxing rings will be used to finish the four-day event on Dec. 20," said Rey Gologan, president of the organizing Amateur Boxing Association of the Phils. (Abap) GenSan Chapter.

At stake are boxing equipment worth more than P100,000. The team champion will receive boxing equipment worth P50,000 plus a trophy, while the first runner-up will get P30,000 worth of boxing

equipment and a trophy. The second and third runners-up will also earn boxing equipment worth P20,000 and P10,000, respectively, with trophies.

Medals will be awarded to the winners of the 10 different weight categories from the 32 kilogram to the 51 kilogram.

Manny Pacquiao, who turns 28 years old today, will give an inspirational message at 1 p.m. Also gracing the opening are Mayor Pedro Acharon and American boxing agent Michael Konz.

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Alcano spearheads RP Super Cup trio

FRESH FROM A STIRRING VICTORY IN the recent World Championships, Ronnie Alcano flies to Chinese Taipei no longer a sidelick but the star of a three-man Filipino contingent competing in the 2006 Super Cup Invitational Championships.

Also carrying the fight for the Philippines are two players from different generations, the legendary Jose Parica and young hotshot Alex Pagulayan, the 2004 World Pool champion.

The host country will parade defending champion and former two-time Asian Games champion Yang-Ching Shun, former World Pool champion Wu Chia-ching and Chao Fong-pang, Chang Jung-lin, Lee Kun-fang and Fu Che-wei.

Also vying in the three-day event are ex-World Pool titlist Ralf Souquet and 2005 Challenge of Champion winner Thomas Engert of Germany. World 8-ball IPT runner-up Rodney Morris of the US,

2005 Velden, Austria World Junior runner-up Hijikato Hayato of Japan and UK's sensation Raj Hundal will also compete for the top prize.

The 34-year-old lanky Alcano stepped out of the shadows of the country's pool greats when he defeated Souquet, 17-11, in the World Pool finals here to win the top prize worth \$100,000.

"I hope to have the same success in the Super Cup so that I can bring more

good news for our countrymen this Christmas and New Year," said Alcano, a standout of the Buggy promotions stable of Perry and Verna Mariano.

Mariano took Alcano under his wing after Alcano won the 2005 SMB Asian 9-ball tour Manila leg and 2005 Korean Open. "Before Ronnie joined me, people could already see that he had a future in the sport," said Mariano. "He just needed to train hard." *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*



RONNIE ALCANO: Eyeing more glory

Asiad bets lead Pichay Cup entries

THE SECOND REP PROSPERO PICHAY CUP National Open and Chess Challenge starts tomorrow at SM City Manila with the country's Asian Games bets leading the participants.

The Philippines, powered by International Masters Darwin Laylo and Ronald Dableo and Jedara Decana, placed eighth behind India, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Qatar and Bangladesh in the mixed team event in Doha.

Opening round begins at 3 p.m. following National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Prospero Pichay's inspirational remarks and Chelli Adasa's invocation.

At stake are trophies and cash prizes, with the winner pocketing the lion's share of P100,000 in the Open division and P20,000 in the Challenge category.

The top five male players and top three women finishers in the tournament will also earn the right to represent the country in the Asian Zonals to be held in Vietnam on Jan. 10-19, 2007.

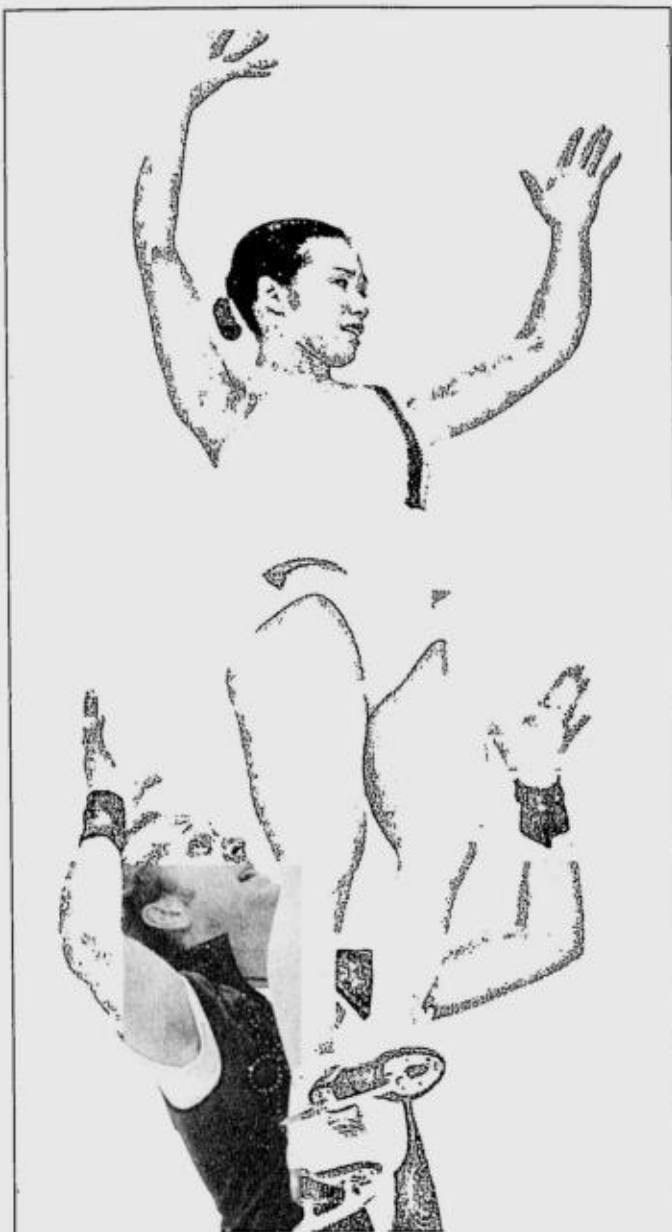
Tournament director Cesar Caturia said the participants can gain outright norms—GM, IM and FM—during the event.

Also expected to join are Grandmasters Mark Paragua, and Nelson Mariano, IM Wesley So, IM Oliver Dimakiling, Richard Bitoon, Idelfonso Datu, Yves Ranol, Oliver Barbosa, Rolando Nolte, John Paul Gomez, Jayson Gonzales, Chito Garma, Emmanuel Senador, IM Ronald Bancod, Petronio Roca, Adrian Pacis and Mirabeau Maga and female players Sherrie Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza, Cristine Rose Mariano, Loreslyl Cuizon, Shercila Cua and Catherine Perena.

Paragua, the country's highest rated player said he wants to make up for his disappointing stint in the recent GMA Cup.

Grandmasters Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio begged off. Torre cited his busy schedule while Antonio said he's still suffering from sinusitis.

NM Marlon Bernardino



GRAND PRIX: The United States' Rena Inoue and John Baldwin perform their pairs short program at the figure skating ISU Grand Prix final in St. Petersburg, Friday.

AFP

Beermen want to pour it all vs Phone Pals

By June Navarro

REPEATING THE SAME WINNING act over Welcoat could be detrimental to the cause of San Miguel Beer.

That's why SMB coach Chot Reyes wants none of it when his Beermen collide with the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals today in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We wanted to conserve our energy for Talk 'N Text. As a result, we became complacent," said Reyes.

Fighting for survival, the Dragons came close to bringing down the hot-streaking Beermen before Danny Seigle waxed hot in the second half and saved the night for Reyes.

"If we play like this against a tough team like Talk 'N Text, we don't stand a chance," said Reyes after the Beermen chalked up win No. 11, their fifth straight, at the expense of the Dragons.

Another victory will assure the Beermen (11-5) of a playoff for the No. 2 spot, one of two out-

right seats in the best-of-seven semifinals.

The Phone Pals, on the other hand, are aiming to dislodge a team in the upper bracket of the standings to snare an automatic berth in the quarterfinals.

At 9-7, the Phone Pals will tie the Sta. Lucia Realtors (10-7) at fifth with a triumph over the Beermen.

The top two seeds after the classification round will advance to the semifinals while teams ranked third to fifth secure automatic quarterfinal berths.

Occupying the third and fourth spots are Red Bull and Purefoods, which take on each other in the other game. Both teams have 10-6 records.

"We just have to stay focused in the last two games," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, whose Giants are riding on a three-game win streak.

"We're shooting the ball well and we're in a good position to make the semifinals," he added.

The defending champion Giants have advanced to the semifinals outright for the past two conferences, including bagging the Philippine Cup crown last conference.

STANDINGS	W	L
Ginebra	12	4
SMB	11	5
Red Bull	10	6
Purefoods	10	6
SLR	10	7
TNT	9	7
Air21	7	10
Alaska	6	10
Coca-Cola	4	13
Welcoat	3	14

GAMES TODAY

(Araneta Coliseum)

4:05 p.m.—SMB vs TNT

6:30 p.m.—Purefoods vs

Red Bull

Top US cocker says NCA derby toughest event

DAN GRAY, THE TOP COCKER IN THE UNITED States and former world championship derby winner in the Philippines, believes that the National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby is the toughest wherever it is held because the entries are comprised of the best cockers in the Philippines and the US.

This year, the NCA World Championship Derby, will be held on Jan. 9, 11 and 13, 2007, at the world-class Pasay cockpit.

Major players in local cockfighting will duke it out during the event. From Davao, the group of champion cocker Bebot Uy has signified their intention to fight it out in the championship. From Pangasinan, former mayor Bebot Villar will also enter the derby.

Aside from Dan Gray, bigwig cockers from the US will flock to the PCC. Oklahoma's Bobby Fairchild, one of the biggest names in American cockfighting, has said he will not rest until he emerges as the winner of the derby.

Part of the proceeds of all NCA derbies goes to the association's scholarship fund for indigent college students. At present, the NCA sponsors four scholars taking up Veterinary Medicine and two scholars taking up Poultry Science at the University of the Philippines, Los Baños.

Maninding, Sarte rule Shago racing

ULY MANINDING AND NIÑO SARTE dominated their respective divisions to emerge as the biggest winners in the 2nd Shago Racing Autocross Series.

Maninding bagged his second straight overall title at the expense of runner-up Pee-wee Mendiola and third placer Noel Rivera.

Sarte, on the other hand, claimed the novice title. Douglas Maninding and Joey Escalante finished second and third overall in the novice class.

Maninding will start his drive for a third straight overall championship when the event, participated in by drivers from TACR Club Mitsubishi, Grupo Toyota, Volkswagen, Cabanatuan Auto Club, Bulacan Auto Club, Explorer Motorworks, Big Chill and Team Art gets under way in February at the Macapagal Avenue.

The competition will run for nine months culminating with the annual awards at the Manila Hotel. Shago Racing is presented by PLDT myDSL.

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—SPRING-TAGAYTAY edged North Cotabato in overtime, 98-96, and back-to-back champion Ozamiz routed, 91-78, Friday to inch closer to a title showdown in the 2006 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the Corpus Christi gym here.

Danny Capobres played the hero's role for the Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president and league EVP Mayor Bambol Tolentino by sinking the triple that tied the count at 80 and extended the contest with seven seconds left in regulation and scoring the last four points in the extra period.

The 6-foot-2 Capobres finished with 21 points. He was supported by Aldrin Morante and Rodel Mallari, who had 17 each, and Nani Epondulan and Marvin Yambao with 15 and 10, respectively.

Spring-Tagaytay's win spoiled a 27-point performance by Henry Fernandez, top gunner of Gov. Manny Piñol's Braves.

Mayor Reynaldo Parejino's Cotta Shrine cagers trailed 18-19 at the end of the first quarter, but surged ahead 52-46 at the turn and never looked back as they bolstered their three-peat drive.

Marlon Basco, Melfred Sampilo and playmaker Lou Gatumbato provided the big shots for Ozamiz, snapping a two-game run by the talented Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co, last conference's losing finalists.

Former PBA star Nelson Asaytono, who led the Explorers' sweep of Tribu Sugbu in the quarterfinals, was held to 11 Friday, leaving the scoring chores to ex-Ginebra guard Rob Johnson and Peter Naron, who tallied 21 and 20 points, respectively.

Archers romped off with a 5-0 sweep—including a 78-71 win versus Letran and a 69-58 victory over rival Ateneo—to rule Group B in the elimination round.

In their own semifinal pairing, the Bombers cruised to an early double-digit advantage to crush the FEU Tamaraws, 78-64, last Wednesday.

The Bombers and the Tamaraws finished with similar 3-2 records in the elimination to share the top spot in Group A.

Mentored by Ariel Vanguardia, the Bombers pulled off surprise wins behind the scrappy bunch of Floyd Dedicario, Mark Cagoco, James Ryan Sena and John Wilson.

Although the Archers are heavily favored, the Bombers put up a tough fight in their elimination-round encounter with the Archers relying on the end-game poise of veterans Cholo Villanueva and Maierhofer to pull off a 70-63 victory.

Jasmine W. Payo

La Salle, JRU dispute plum

EARLY FAVORITE DE LA SALLE AND SURPRISE finalist Jose Rizal shoot for the FilOil-Flying V Homegrown Invitational Cup title in a winner-take-all match at 4 p.m. today at the PhilSports Arena.

The Archers have come a long way from their jittery overtime win against Letran in the opener to their methodical dismantling of the University of the East in the semifinals.

The Bombers, a poor seventh placer in the NCAA, banked on the gritty plays of their underdog crew to clinch a Finals berth.

Also battling in a knockout contest are the UE Warriors and the FEU Tamaraws, who will dispute third place at 2 p.m.

Last Wednesday, rookie Bader Malabes and Rico Maierhofer led the Archers to a 76-67 semifinal triumph against the Warriors to extend their winning streak to six games.

With Franz Pumaren calling the shots, the

Race 1—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Fine Otter (9), Dancing Slew (6), Hurry Prince (1), Lovely Tara (8), Song Bird (5)

Race 2—(Ort/Tri)—One Man's Soul (5), Devil Rising (6), Gundan (4), Military Might (1)

Race 3—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Princess Avalakity (5), Sagarmatha (4), Kalibigan (2), Color My World (5), Beat Of Thunder/Lady Thunder (10)

Race 4—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Queen Esther (3), Tigerliff (2), Legendary (4), Special Guest (9), Golden Halo (11)

Race 5—(Quarte/Tri)—Hell Fire (2), Big Deb (6), Floral Arch (1), Tiger Song (4)

Race 6—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Gold Money (6), Don Ramon (4), Ferrarione (5), Ingray Ingray (7), Chicklet (14)

Race 7—(Ort/Tri)—Eurobucks/Real Spicy (2), Empire King (5), Native Land (4), Juggernaut (8)

Race 8—(Ort/Tri)—Donna Nene (10), Spinning Bullet (4), Scarab (1), Red Diamond (4), Friendly Fire (6)

Race 9—(Ort/Tri)—Hard To Find (3), Don Exequiel (4), Batong Silyar (5), Mr. Victory (6)

Race 10—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Rivaldo (4), Sincerity (3), Magic Dancer (14), Galaxy Wars (11), Sir Benjo (9)

Race 11—(Ort/Tri)—Wild Orchid (4), Ever Mine Now! La Tienne (2), Glory And Honour (6), Daisarg/Orculation (3)

Race 12—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Just A Moment (14), American Idol (13), Sa Wakas (3), Lady Cathy (7), Long Hitter (9)

Race 13—(Super 6/Ort/Tri)—El Cid (7), Jaye (14), Earth Angel (3), American Beauty (1), My Little Africa (2), Express Strike (10)

San Beda-Alabang, Ateneo keep titles

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS SAN BEDA COLLEGE-Alabang and Ateneo de Manila repeated their last year's victories in this year's Metro Manila finals of the Futures basketball League (FBL). In the Midgets Division I championship match, San Beda College, led by overall MVP Patrick Tumaneng and Vincent Morante, who emerged MVP among the 12-year-old players, took the measure of La Salle-Greenhills, 45-36. The other age group MVPs were Thomas Torres from La Salle-Greenhills for the 11-year-olds and another La Salitte, Miko Montelibano in the 13-year-old group. Ateneo de Manila, with Mini Division I overall MVP Jay Javelosa and age group MVP Jojo Matthew Nieto at the helm, beat Lourdes School-Mandaluyong, 56-37. LSM's Henry Subido emerged the 10-year-old age group MVP. Division II champion in the Midgets was De La Salle-Zobel which beat St. Claire, 35-17.

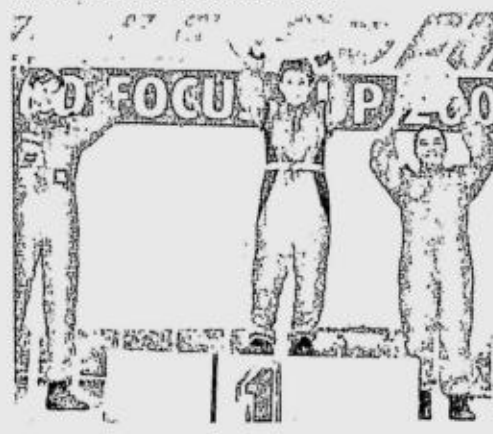
SPORTSWATCH

DLSU Batch '82 golf tourney

THE DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY BATCH '82, THIS YEAR'S SILVER JUBILIARANS, hosts the 4th Brother Benedict Golf Cup on Feb. 27, 2007, at the North Course of Canlubang Golf & Country Club. Participants in the tournament will be classified from Class A, B, C, D and E, as well as Ladies and Senior's Open. Formerly known as the DLSU Alumni Golf Tournament, the event was renamed four years ago in honor of the late Br. Josiah Benedict, FSC, foremost supporter of the school's sports programs. The event, to be chaired by Ferdie Atendido, hopes to accommodate foreign-based DLSU alumni attending the Class '82 GREENations Homecoming on March 3, 2007. Entry fee is P2,400 (inclusive of green fee, tournament fee, lunch, giveaways and raffle prizes). Participants are requested to submit certified handicaps from their home clubs. For info, call 5236158 and 5265612, or log in at www.dlsaa.com.

Philippine International Darts Open

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST AND BRIGHTEST DARTERS WILL SHOOT FOR THE singles titles in the Philippine International Darts Open-Battle of the Champions '06 (PIDO-BC '06) set Dec. 22, at the Pearl Billiards/Darts and Bar at the 4th floor of the Pearl Plaza Mall in Parañaque City. PIDO-BC '06 is presented by Leroy International Adn. Bhd. in cooperation with Darts Council of the Philippines (DCP). The event is open to all DCP bona fide member in good standing who are champions, the top 16 ranked players of BC '05 qualifying legs and others who will participate as wild entries. Free DCP membership for 2007 will be given to all participants. There will be no entry fee for all BC '05 qualifiers while wild entries will pay an entry fee of P1,000 (men) and P300 (women). A total of P40,000 will be awarded to the top 8 men's singles winners with the champion pocketing P20,000 plus cup. As DCP's thanksgiving giveaway, all BC '05 leg champions will receive P1,500 each and BC '05 top ranked players will receive P500 each. A total of P10,000 will be raffled off to 10 winners among the participants. For inquiries, contact DCP director Steve Dorotheo at 0917-8161001.



WINNERS: Joward Policarpio (center) ruled two of the last four races to capture the 2006 TRS-Ford Focus Cup recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit. With him are runner-up Stuart MacDonald (left) and third placer Toti Turalba.

Website: www.inq7money.net

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Full-time mom finds she's a little country /B3

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

Christmas means big bucks for junk art

Women show there is money from trash

BAGUIO CITY—Something old has become something new for Christmas at downtown Baguio's Malcolm Square, drawing the interest of Christmas shoppers.

On display are giant lanterns, unique yuletide presents, and Christmas trees made of recycled paper, discarded boot leather and milk cans.

"Christmas has given junk art a much needed break in the summer capital," said Mila Costales, one of the city's recycled art pioneers.

Costales helped promote junk art into the market in 1990, when the city government and non-government organizations began supporting entrepreneurs who found new ways of retailing recycled products.

For a while, she says, the recycling fad helped keep their trade in the limelight.

Costales says Romeo Concio, chief of the city's general services office, set up a junk art shop at a

mall here and it encouraged the trade for some time.

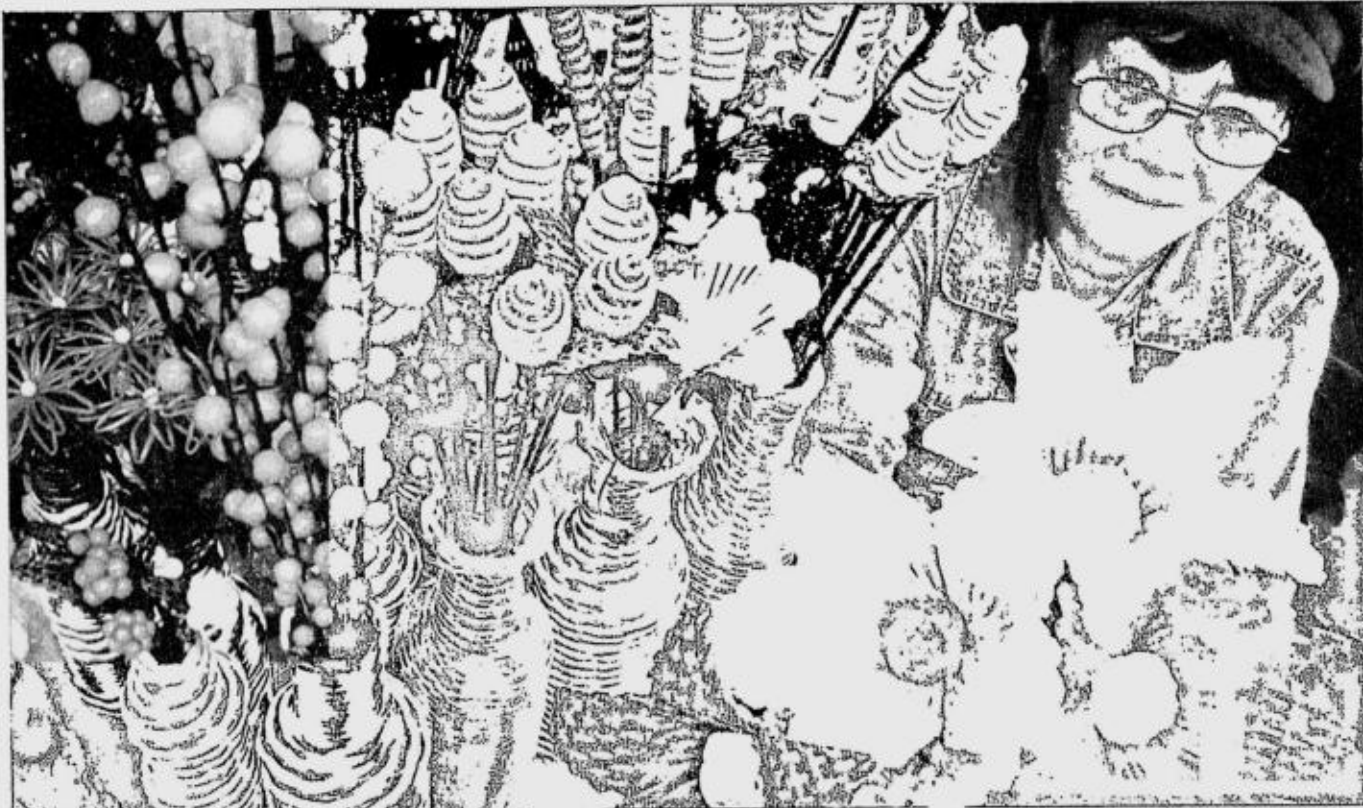
But many of the retailers eventually dropped junk art because of the waning interest, she says.

"Our biggest revenues come up to P26,000 in a year and we were happy for that. We're all housewives and this is just extra income

BIG BUCKS/ B2



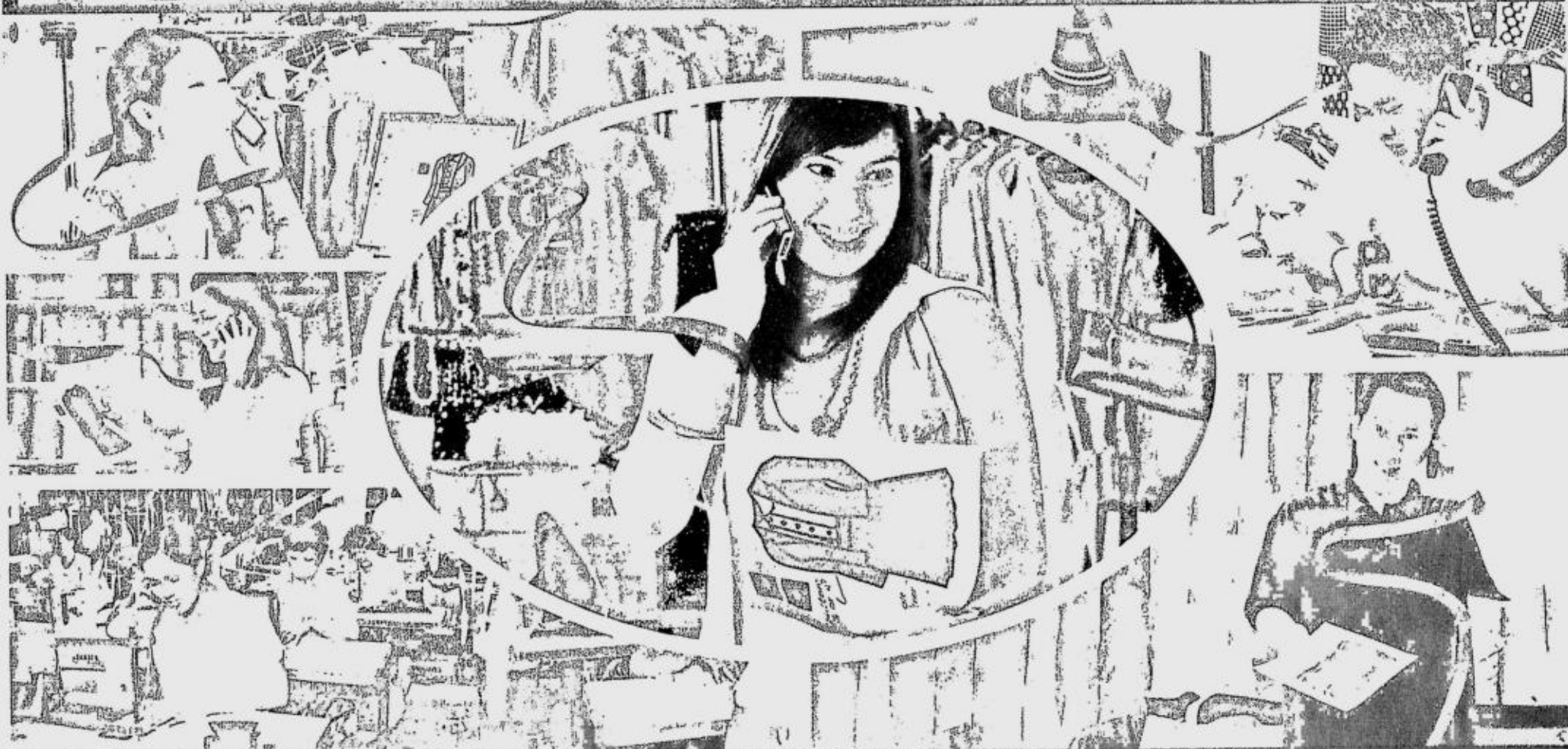
SOLEDAD Valencia holds Christmas stars made of recycled paper.



MILA Costales helped make junk art a popular brand in Baguio, beginning with these colorful flowers made of recycled paper twine.

PHOTOS BY EV ESPRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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Promo period from Dec. 1, 2006 to Jan. 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4868, series of 2006.

Christmas means big bucks for junk art



TURTLE-SHAPED bags made of recycled paper sells for P250

From page B1

[for many of us]," she says.

So when the city opened the bazaar, junk art traders needed some convincing, Costales says.

"We all make our products by hand, and because we are all housewives, many of us started complaining that the work had caused veins to pop out of our wrists," she says.

They made the right choice.

Soledad Valencia, owner of Binadang Ethnic Handicrafts, sold recycled paper twine shaped into a P250 Christmas tree and dozens of angel tree decors.

"We appreciate the interest. We've been trying to get investors to see we are good investments," she says. **Vincent Cabreza and EV Espiritu, Inquirer Northern Luzon**



PAPER-MACHE cell phone cases that sell for P20



MILA Costales helped make junk art a popular brand in Baguio.



NANI Fernandez, 25, reconstructs destroyed boot leather into wallets and exotic leather bags. PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITUINQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON



MORE ITEMS made of recycled paper



TURNING used plastic cups into colorful Christmas decor actually makes good business sense for housewives in Baguio who promote recycling.



CHILDREN are drawn to Christmas decors that look brand new, but are actually made of recycled materials

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Full-time mom finds she's 'a little bit country'

Forty-something shows it's never too late to start a venture

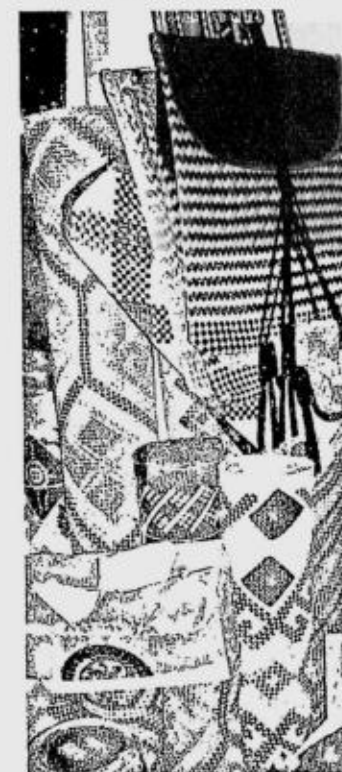
By Amy R. Remo

IT WAS ONLY IN HER 40s that Marivic T. Avila discovered her penchant for designing and recreating simple household items into elegant, practical décor.

"I like to experiment with indigenous household items and turn them into something both decorative and functional," says Avila, who owns County Favorite Heirlooms. "But it was only last 2004 that I discovered I have the talent—that is, when my kids got older and I had more time in my hands."

Put up in October 2004, Avila's store, County Favorite Heirlooms, is a mish mash of various household decorative items from banigs, katol holders, collapsible trays, lighters, fans, key chains, household utensils, anklets, candle holders to wall decors and table tops.

Avila relates she used to work for Philippine Air Lines, but had to stop to take care of her sons.



BANIGS are among Avila's bestsellers.

Even as a "full-time" mom, Avila says she used to have a very hectic schedule, with her daily grind beginning at 5:30 a.m.

Participating in her sons' school activities and in parent-teacher conferences also kept her busy the rest of the day.

"So when my sons grow older and I had more time for myself, I decided to put it to good use and provide employment for a few, opportunities for my suppliers and their workers, and, with a little luck, maybe even extra income for me," says Avila.

She relates that the idea to create, design and sell decorative and functional household items came to her in one of her rare visits at her cousin's house in Bacolod.

According to Avila, she bought a few bags from her cousin, who exports these along with other indigenous products.

Avila, who gave bags away as Christmas gifts, thought it might be a good idea to bring these products to Manila, along with other banig items like collapsible trays.

"I thought it was a feasible idea so I rented this small space here in Market! Market! and tried selling a few items first," says Avila.

And it was feasible indeed. Avila's first foray into the retail business was successful.

Avila managed to capture the

yuppies' attention for her cute and unique native bags, key-chains and other similar 'kikay' stuff, as well as the the balikbayans and foreigners for her indigenous products.

Her bestsellers are mostly banig items such as trays, wallets and bags. These retail for as low as P100 to as high as P1,500.

Most of Avila's products are sourced from the provinces like Bacolod and Samar, and use indigenous materials.

Choosing her goods

"If I won't buy it, I won't sell it," says Avila. "This has always been my principle in selecting the items I put for sale."

According to Avila, the items that she sells are unique because she mostly designs and recreates them.

For example, her rectangular collapsible trays are actually ordinary fruit trays she got from Samar.

She talked to her supplier to recreate for her a multi-purpose tray of different shapes, colors and sizes, whose banig (base of the tray) can be replaced and folded and made reversible.

Avila's trays could be used as fruit trays, bread holders and even as bathroom organizers. Beach resort owners would sometimes order trays for their resort rooms and bathrooms.

Avila also has what she calls as flying saucer, which is actually just a "katol" holder, she designed herself. These holders also became quite a hit in the provinces and beach resorts.

"I pick up my ideas everywhere. But what's more important than my ideas is the clear and constant communication between me and my suppliers so that we can come up with the best design possible," explains Avila.

"That's why," she adds, "even if I do not export or manufacture, my products reach foreign shores as they have become favorite gifts of balikbayans and foreigners alike."

"My products have become popular to these people because they are unique, affordable and proudly Philippine made," says Avila. "Most importantly, they can easily fit inside one's luggage as most of my banig items can be folded flat without necessarily making ugly creases."

Competitive edge

Avila admits that she is likewise faced by certain difficulties as do other retailers.

"While many come by the store and admire the products, unfortunately, they have other priorities for their resources," laments Avila. "My only recourse is to sell the merits and benefits of buying my products and how these can improve their lives."

Also, other than her products being uniquely decorative and functional, Avila claims that another edge she has over other similar stores is that she personally mans her store day in and out.

"First, you have to look your best to be presentable. You have to be more sociable and outgoing. You can't be picky with who you talk to," she says. "You have to make 'chicka' with them first because in the end, they might end up buying your stuff or they can refer you to their families and friends."

"This is more of me. That's why I tell my two sales ladies to observe me while I sell my products," adds Avila.

While Avila is quite content with the relative success of her store, she says she would like to take it slow.

"I have many plans for the fu-

ture but my focus right now is to improve my day-to-day sales. Once I see that the number of customers and demanded items can no longer be accommodated by the size of my store, then I will have to look at other options and make my next move—expansion, for instance."



UNIQUE katol holders designed by Avila



AVILA in front of her quaint store

PHOTOS BY TESS S. SAMANIEGO

New San Jose Builders, Inc. reaches out to our Kababayans Worldwide

Bridging the Distance and Building Home while Away from Home

By: Obie Obias

remittance offices and various government institutions located there. As the company's representative, she is working on establishing a good relationship between NSJBI and our kababayans abroad. According to her, she has learned a lot from all her traveling. "...but what's more educational is the knowledge I acquire about the various stories and experiences shared to me by fellow Filipinos I have met along the way."

According to NSJBI President Rey L. Vergara, the company gives as much importance to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as its local clients because Filipinos abroad are always on the look out for worthy investments in the Philippines. "We believe our affordable condominium projects are worth every Filipino's hard-earned money," Mr. Vergara adds.

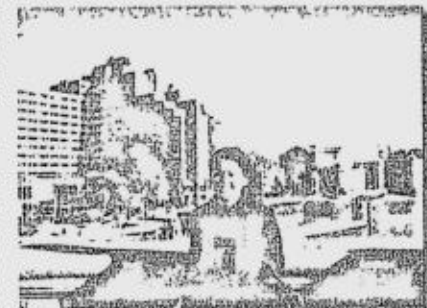


Construction update of Victoria Towers as of Dec. 01, 2006

New San Jose Builders, Inc. Reaches out to our Kababayans Worldwide

NSJBI's competitiveness in the global market is fast reaching Filipinos worldwide due to its property management's compliance to international standards. This is evident in their urban projects, which proudly builds the concept of modern standard of living with its contemporary and cozily designed condominium units that are also strategically located in the heart of the metropolis. Affordable payment schemes were created particularly for Filipinos abroad so that this investment could be made more available to them. Therefore, they can start owning their homes even while they're away from the country. The company recognizes how important it is for our kababayans to be able to expend their hard-earned money from abroad to a worthwhile and beneficial investment in the Philippines. And what is more rewarding than finally having a home of your own? "Our payment scheme is designed to be as affordable as possible without compromising international standards of quality," explains Mr. Vergara. "Because New San Jose Builders, Inc. handles everything—being the builder, developer, and planner rolled into one—clients are assured there won't be any sudden and unforeseen add-on costs."

Victoria Towers will rise in a 4,529 sq. m. prime property at the corner of Timog and Panay Avenues. When completed, it will showcase 1,130 residential and 24 penthouse units. Owners can choose



First Vice President - Cristia Bonifacio-Lin

between single or combined loft type units, with each single unit offering 3 bedrooms, and a spacious foyer. Amenities include an infinity pool, a multi-purpose function room catering to at most 200 guests, a business center, a gym, a spa, day care, and a playground for kids.

Each unit in Victoria Towers is 48% cheaper than those of other projects within the area. NSJBI guarantees buyers that the project will be finished within two years, with an estimated appreciation value up to one million pesos (P1,000,000) within the same period. The company also offers an inexpensive P 10,000 monthly amortization that keeps in mind the buyers' financial capacity to pay.

Currently, 50% of Victoria Towers has already been sold in the market because of its significant value. Buyers have recognized the worth of investing in Victoria Towers, thus, leading them to take advantage of NSJBI's affordable payment scheme.

With the opening of its upcoming offices in Milan and London, NSJBI hopes to strengthen its division in resale and leasing out of units both for the local and international market. Ms. Bonifacio-Lin, who currently heads the establishment of NSJBI in Europe, explained, "Our kababayans abroad don't have the luxury of time and access to information to know which are worthy investments in the Philippines. Given this situation, we recognize their interest to own homes that are affordable and at the same time located in a prime area. Therefore, we are giving them venues and access to information which is the primary reason why we are building our offices there—so that we can be of assistance to them in every possible manner." In the span of 5 years, the company envisions that NSJBI will be synonymous to the concept of prime investments and affordable living in the market.



President of NSJBI - Rey L. Vergara

In the end, there's nothing much more sweeter than returning to the Philippines and living the good life back in the company of family and friends. Surprisingly, this is one common view shared by many of our Filipino kababayans abroad despite the luxury and comfort of living in a first world country such as Europe.

In her most recent visit during the European road show of New San Jose Builders, Inc. (NSJBI), Ms. Cristia Bonifacio-Lin, FVP for International Sales and Marketing, was warmly greeted by the perpetual hospitality of the Filipinos. "I was amazed by the hospitality of our kababayans there, considering that everyone is living in a very fast-paced, modern, and busy environment," she said, pertaining to how our co-Filipinos graciously opened their doors to her and took the time to engage in long and intense tête-à-têtes with her while savoring authentic home-cooked adobo over lunch and dinner.

The previous success of NSJBI's participation in the Barrio Fiesta road show in the United Kingdom and USA was nonetheless the fruit of the overwhelming reception of the Filipinos living and working there. This led the company to hold its most recent European leg in the lovely locale of Nice, France, United Kingdom, and Italy, to name a few. Ms. Bonifacio-Lin made her rounds at embassies,



Designer's Perspective of Victoria Towers



CANDLES, burners, matchstick lighters are also available at Avila's store

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Couple starts online photo album venture

Home-based business growing

By Sharon Robas-Macawile

ONLINE BUSINESSES SPELL convenience to those who do not want to leave home to buy something or to avail of a service.

Couple Dick and Colleen Tan-Chiang think their business is suited to a lot of women—who have to balance career and motherhood.

Their business after all is home-based so it allows Colleen to take care of their kids.

Dick stresses that his wife, a Business Administration major in Computer Application from DL-SU-CSB, "runs the show" while he, a Computer Science degree holder from Ateneo and an MBA from Babson Graduate School of Business in the US, does the software programming, helps out in lay-outting and acts as the "PR" of the business.

PictureBook

ThePictureShop.com is an online service which lays out uploaded photos via the Internet into a book-like format called PictureBook.

This is the first online business for the couple who own a pizza franchise in Marikina. They started PictureShop during the second quarter of this year. "Before that, we were doing it mainly for



SOME of PictureShop's layouts

friends and family," Dick shares.

The business mainly started out from their own needs when the couple had their first child.

"We had one daughter then (their son was born just recently) and just like any new parent, we couldn't get enough of photographing our own daughter. We would take lots of pictures of her whenever we go on small trips. My wife would develop it and just file it in the free plastic slip-on albums that the camera shop gives for free. It was just too boring. And when you pick it up later and try to recall what happened in those photos, you don't really remember because you can't put

text or captions on traditional prints," Dick explains.

Later, a friend from the United States showed them a PictureBook of his kids done by the US online service Photoworks.com. The Chiangs liked the book so much that they tried it only to be disappointed in the end.

"The shipping alone cost around \$20. It was actually more than the cost of the PictureBook itself! And when we got our copy, we weren't too happy with the quality from the type of paper used, to the clarity of the colors, etc.," says Dick.

With that experience the couple, who dabbles a lot on comput-

ers, decided to venture in the same business. "We did some trial-and-error until we got the exact effect we wanted for a PictureBook," he says.

The PictureBook is 7" x 5" (similar to a 5R size photo), wire-bound and priced at P750.

"We started with 5R because we wanted a format that people can lug around. Moms especially want to just slip it into their handbags to show off their baby pictures to friends and relatives. So the form factor is quite convenient," Dick says.

They are planning to come up with an 8" x 8" format early next year. The PictureBook contains 20 pages that can hold up to 80 photos. However, it can allow a maximum of 26 pages for an extra charge of P25 per page, if the pictures are too many.

Personal-feel

Customers can also include scanned handwritten notes, tickets, stamps and other things associated with every photo to give it a personal, scrapbook-like feel.

The most important components in putting up an online business are a website and an online payment system, says Dick. One should also have a "decent

DICK and Colleen Chiang

PC with a good-sized monitor, photo editing software and the rest is outsourced (like binding and printing)."

Dick shares that although all their orders are mainly from the Philippines, people from as far as the Middle East are registering at their website. Tapping the foreign market is quite tough, he says, because of international shipping costs.

"Interestingly though, there is a secondary market for foreigners. Lots of them are OFWs. And instead of them printing their photos there and mailing it to their relatives here, it will come out cheaper for them to just upload to our service, have us print it onto a PictureBook then deliver it to their relatives for free," declares Dick.

For those who do not have broadband connections, pick-up service is provided for an extra charge of P50. Customers who prefer this option can just burn the photos on CD and give it to the messenger together with the payment. CDs can also be sent via courier if the location is too far for pick-up.

Albums are delivered for free nationwide within 5 to 7 days after payment has been made.

A customer can order multiple copies of the PictureBook. In fact, the images sent by a customer are saved for a maximum of one year in case the customer orders for reprints.

Although most photo developing centers offer lay-outting and editing services, Dick expresses the advantages of ThePictureShop.com.

"Photo developing centers tend to cater to a mass production type of model ... They use pre-existing templates and just drag-and-drop your photos to it. This 'canned' approach allows them to produce a lot of albums at a very fast rate.

"In contrast, our service uses meticulous hand lay-outting. We also do a lot of color correction and enhancements because point-and-shoot camera users often do not use proper lighting ... We manually correct these 'flaws' in the process of lay-outting. And, of course, we're online. So you don't have to travel through traffic to a mall to get something done," Dick explains.

Recently, the online venture introduced its newest product, PictureCalendars, which has the same dimension and price as the PictureBook.

Asked what advice he can give to would-be online entrepreneurs? Dick has this to say:

"I think online business owners should be very particular about the quality of their products. Unlike a physical retail store, we do not have the benefit of allowing our customers to touch or feel the actual product. So I think they mainly rely on word-of-mouth or take a leap-of-faith. Because of that, we have to make sure that when they do receive the finished product, they will be satisfied."

For inquiries, check www.thepictureshop.com

Deutsche Bank supports microfinance in RP

DEUTSCHE BANK MANILA HAS signed a loan agreement with Taytay sa Kauswagan Inc. (TSKI)—an NGO involved in microfinancing—for P109,853,100 (\$2.25 million). This agreement marks the first tranche of an overall loan to TSKI equivalent to \$4.5 million—which has been put forward by The Global Commercial Microfinance Consortium, which is managed by Deutsche Bank.

Enrico Cruz, chief country officer of Deutsche Bank in the Philip-

pines, says the signing shows the importance that Deutsche Bank has given microfinance and its attractiveness as a new way of alleviating poverty in developing countries. "We are pleased to have this opportunity to invest in poverty alleviation through TSKI," said Cruz.

The consortium's investors, which include Deutsche Bank, AXA, Cooperative Bank, HP Merrill Lynch, Munich Re, Standard Life, State Street, Storebrand, as well as

US, UK and French development agencies and individuals, have joined together to apply their business know-how, capital and development initiative to market-based solutions addressing the alleviation of global poverty.

Launched in November 2005, the Global Commercial Microfinance Consortium has funds of \$80.6 million to help microfinance groups in poor countries bridge the gap between demand and supply in their financial services.

Acer turns 30, to continue channel business model

AT THE CELEBRATION OF ACER INC.'S 30th anniversary, chairman J.T. Wang stated that the channel business model has proved to be the mainstream model in the PC industry, and he highlighted that Acer will continue to implement this business model with the confidence to break through new barriers as the company marches toward its goal of becoming a global top 3 PC brand in 2007.

Wang reflected that in 2001 the direct business model for the PC industry was very strong, while the channel business model was questionable and widely unsupported at that time. As the industry developed, however, the channel business model gained mainstream status and has in fact begun to show its superiority. "Our business direction over the last few years has clearly been correct," stated Wang.

Acer president Gianfranco Lanci indicated that, following the company's restructuring in the year 2000, Acer has built a

highly effective model for its brand business; this model has laid the foundation for Acer's growth and success in the last few years. "This model—which can be duplicated across countries—now serves as a reference for the rest of the industry and confirms that Acer's long-term vision of implementing an indirect business model to compete with the direct model was accurate," Lanci said.

Since its inception in 1976, Acer has pursued the goal of becoming a globally recognized high-tech brand business, even while facing different challenges at different times, and has consistently modified its direction successfully in order to overcome difficulties and keep moving forward. Acer today held its 30th anniversary celebration to express its profound appreciation of all friends who have supported Acer along the way.

Acer ranks as the world's No. 4 branded PC vendor.

Sun's triple treats promo on

SUN CELLULAR RECENTLY LAUNCHED its new offering—Sun Triple Treats.

The scheme involves forming a group of three Sun subscribers and getting a 10 percent instant discount on Sun Unlimited and Sulit Calls products. Once the group reaches P750 worth of combined load within 30 days, each member will automatically get a bigger discount of 20 percent on all Sun Unlimited and Sulit Calls products.

To Join via SMS, type REG<space>First

Name/Last Name/Address and send to 333. Sun will reply the "group name" which you must send to your barkada and other potential members. To join the second and third barkada member, key in JOIN<space>Group Name/First Name/Last Name/Address and send to 333.

Sun Cellular's Triple Treats Prize Overload Promo runs from Oct. 23, 2006 to Jan. 28, 2007.

RP's real estate event gaining prominence

THE PHILIPPINES' PIONEERING international real estate event is gaining global prominence and drawing big-time participants from all over the world.

Organized by US-based event organizer Expo and Convention Promotion Inc. (ECPI), the 1st Annual Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference (www.aireec.com) is positioning the Philippines as Asia's top global second-home destination.

ECPI is making AIREEC affordable to attendees and exhibitors to encourage wider participation.

Major players in Europe, United States,

Canada, Central and South America, and Asia have confirmed participation.

This was revealed by Mia Balbuena Acena, European division manager of the Switzerland office of the Barlin International Group, the proponent of AIREEC slated at the Philippine International Convention Center and the World Trade Center on Dec. 6-10 next year.

"With the Asian economy booming, AIREEC is a 'must-event' for the world's key decision makers, players and shakers of the global real estate industry," Acena pointed out.

Properties Expo 2007 set

THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY LAUNCHES the Philippine Properties Exposition 2007, the largest annual gathering of real property developers.

The Expo brings together property sellers and buyers in a four-day event.

It will be held at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City from Jan. 25 to 28 and will cater primarily to the growing market of overseas Filipino workers, who are now starting to invest heavily in real estate.

The event's organizers, led by the Creba Social Housing Foundation Inc. (CSHFI), have forged agreements with relevant government agencies, like the Philippine Over-

seas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Department of Tourism, and the Department of Labor and Employment to help guide Filipinos working abroad on real estate opportunities in the country.

The CSHFI, the social responsibility arm of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association, has also tapped nongovernment organizations, such as the Philippine Retirement Authority, the Philippine Association of Service Exporters Inc., and the Seafarers' Board.

For details and inquiries, call (632) 864-0224, 819-2058 to 59, or (0919) 849-5648.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



It has come to the attention of MITSUBISHI MOTORS CORPORATION of Japan (hereinafter "MMC") that a number of business entities in the Philippines are selling counterfeit Mitsubishi-branded spare parts for automobiles. In doing so, these business entities are committing trademark infringement against the trademark owner of the Mitsubishi trademark and unfair competition against MMC, crimes that are punishable by 2 to 5 years of imprisonment and a fine of Pesos 50,000 to 200,000 under Republic Act No. 8293, the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

More significantly, these unscrupulous establishments are endangering the lives and safety of the motoring public by passing off substandard automotive spare parts as genuine Mitsubishi-branded spare parts. These counterfeit products have not been subjected to the rigorous testing and quality control standards that Mitsubishi Motors has become synonymous with.

In the past few weeks, MMC has intensified its campaign against those engaged in this illegal activity. A number of these establishments have been raided by the National Bureau of Investigation, and a large number of counterfeit spare parts have been seized. Criminal charges for unfair competition and trademark infringement are being prepared against the owners of these establishments.

MMC shall not hesitate to bring immediate legal action against those who are importing, selling, and distributing counterfeit Mitsubishi spare parts.

The public is hereby advised to deal with authorized Mitsubishi dealers of automotive spare parts to avoid being deceived. Any information that may lead to the investigation and subsequent prosecution of persons or entities engaged in the illegal importation, sale and distribution of counterfeit spare parts should be directed to MMC's anti-counterfeiting legal counsel:



BENGZON
NEGRE
UNTALAN
Intellectual Property Attorneys

2/F SEDCO Building Rada cor Legaspi Sts.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City
1229 Philippines
Tel. (632) 813-0120
Fax: (632) 894-2073
Email: bnu@iplaw.ph
www.iplaw.ph

Women are working more, still earning less than men

WOMEN MAY BE WORKING more, whether it's the office, the rice fields or an employer's home, but they are still owning and earning less than men do.

Unicef reports that in 2005, women accounted for some 40 percent of the world's economically active population.

But women in the East Asia and Pacific region earned only an estimated 62 percent of men's income. Even in industrialized countries, women earn only 57 percent of men's income.

The study on fulfilling women's social and economic rights

for the betterment of children appears in The State of the World's Children (SOWC) 2007, Unicef's flagship. The SOWC 2007 argues that when gender equality is achieved, the world's children are positively affected.

The gender wage gaps exist across countries with available evidence showing that women's nominal wages are roughly 20 percent lower than men's.

This earnings gap often translates to lower resources for children's health care, adequate nutrition and education, since women function as children's primary caregivers.

Women also own fewer assets than men due to smaller salaries, lack of control over household income, gender biases in property and inheritance laws, and even state land distribution programs.

In a survey of eight developing countries, women daily worked an average of one hour and nine minutes more than men. In Mexico, for example, women in paid employment still undertook 33 hours of household tasks each week against the men's contribution of six hours. In a time use survey in India, women spent 35 hours a

week on domestic chores and caring for children and the elderly. Men did the same for only four hours.

A situation analysis commissioned by Unicef and the International Labor Organization found that majority of trafficked children in the Philippines are also girls. This is attributed to the high demand for women in housekeeping, for jobs in the service sector, and for the trafficking trade for sexual exploitation. Since the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, reported cases in the Philippines have been on the upswing.

But of 114 cases in 2005, only seven convictions have so far been made.

Filipino girls and boys rated high in access to education with girls sometimes with more school participation.

Net primary school attendance of girls is 89 percent of total number of children of primary school age. Net secondary school enrollment for females is 67 percent of total number of children of secondary school age. The Philippines also registered an adult literacy rate of 93 percent.

Research data from Mexico,

Ecuador and the Philippines also point to children suffering from negative psychological effects when parents migrate to work. An estimated three to six million Filipino children under 18 years old have migrant parents. While remittances bolster the household finances, Filipino children of migrant mothers have reported feeling angry, lonely and afraid. In other countries, children were also found to be at higher risk of abuse and trafficking when they were left in the custody of relatives and friends while parents worked abroad.

Two very old and the art of ...

From page B6

month" as Luz is, she is an expert too. It may take her longer to fill an order because her designs are very intricate. Finding her was nothing short of a miracle.

Her mother, the late Priscila, was a favorite of former first lady Imelda Marcos and was frequently picked up to demonstrate her craft before foreign visitors. Those were the days, Lita's sister, also named Luz, reminisces.

Luz has 25 patented designs featuring rural scenes—bahay kubo, woman in baro't saya, Maria Clara, man pounding rice, etc. Luz made herself. Lita has more than a hundred designs, some she inherited from her mother, others were designed by brother Juan Ramos who passed away in 1982. Lita's designs are mostly delicate small flowers and leaves with an occasional butterfly, bahay kubo, coconut tree, dove and the like. She now designs her Christmas wrap-pers.

Both Luz and Lita use colored or white papel de japon. While Luz herself does the buying in Divisoria of the imported paper, Lita contents herself with locally produced paper. This probably accounts for the difference in price for the cutouts—P50 more for a hundred of the imported ones.



LEFT-handed Luz Ocampo prepares to cut following traced design

Lita uses three heirloom scissors which belonged to her mother, while Luz has about 15 scissors in all, some *pasalubong* from friends who have traveled abroad. Luz does everything herself, from buying the paper, to the designs, to the tracing of the design, to cutting out the design, and the sharpening of the scissors.

Unlike Lita who wears glasses, Luz, who is left-handed, wears none. She rests her eyes by looking at the greenery around her or dabbing miraculous water from Lourdes, France, on it. Luz works on her art in the big terrace of her Malolos home where she moved in 1993. There, she spends on natural light and natural air-conditioning.

To make the paper cutouts, Luz

and Lita:

1. Cut the papel de japon into the desired size, 3.5 inches by 10 inches, for Luz, or 4.25 inches by 10 inches for Lita.

2. Fold six or four sheets together, six of the imported paper, four of the local paper. Lita staples the sheets of paper together up to the design.

3. Using a template of the desired design, trace the design on the prepared paper using a Mongol pencil number 2.

4. Cut out the design using special scissors like Solingen's cuticle scissors which have narrow, slightly curved tips. At this point Lita cuts out the stapled portion as she finalizes the cutout.

5. Press each batch of cutouts between the pages of an old magazine or used activity workbook to keep the dainty filigrees from getting crumpled.

Today Lita can finish 200 pieces in five days. In her youth, Luz could do 100 pieces in a day. At 84, Luz says, she can finish less, "nangangawit o naiinip."

Luz can be reached by PLDT landline 044-7915657 or in her Malolos home at 83 Inang Wilka, Caniogan. Lita lives in 142 Payawal St., Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan. Her cell phone number is 0917-8076228.

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G/F Anderson Bldg. II, Old Nati Hi-way, Brgy. Parlan, Calamba, Laguna

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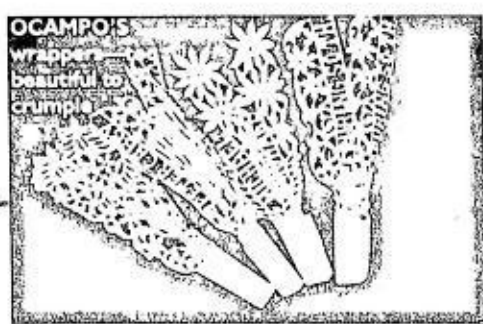
Sunday BIZ

Two very old ladies and the art of cutting pastillas wrappers



LUZ OCAMPO, 84, wears no glasses and has steady hands.

They lovingly create wrappers that people just throw away



LITA RAMOS LIBUNAO, 72, pastillas wrapper artist

By EC Estrada
Contributor
Photos by Manny Alcabao

THIS STORY IS NOT A SUCCESS STORY. AT least not in financial terms.

Although if these two ladies were living in another country where creativity, labor and artistic work command a high price, then they would be pretty well off now.

Luz Ocampo, 84, and Lita Ramos Libunao, 72, are into traditional pastillas wrapper-making because of their love for the craft. Both tubong San Miguel, Bulacan, they are active in keeping the art of the traditional pastillas wrapper alive.

The traditional pastillas wrapper is cutout *papel de japon* in different designs and colors. It can be personalized with the name of the recipient or convey messages such as "Mabuhay," "Happy Birthday," or "Merry Christmas."

December is the peak season. Aside from the orders for birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, there are orders for Christmas. They have in stock batches of six or four which are easy to count when drop-in customers or foreign visitors ask for them.

The two do not require a deposit for special orders. There is no guarantee that an order will be picked up and paid for. Only last month, Lita got a personal call from someone she knew, the owner of a well-known Bulacan sweets shop, for an order of Christmas paper cuttings featuring the Christmas Star.

She made the designs and filled up the order only to be told that it was too late to send these abroad as the customer had planned and that she would not be needing them anymore.

Lita says she wished the customer who had placed the order had taken them anyway, if only to appreciate the effort she had put into it—making the designs and cutting the paper out.

This also happened to Luz last Christmas, supposedly the season of love. An order for a well-known hotel in Makati which said, "Pasko sa _____" was not picked up either. Luz says this is off the record, but it is intrinsic to the article. We are leaving out the name of the hotel though.

Learning the craft

Luz learned the craft during "peacetime" in school when she was about 11 to 12 years old. Lita learned it from her mother Priscila Gatchalian Ramos when she was growing up.

Both have given demonstrations before foreign tourists upon the invitation of tourism officials. Luz has been written about in magazines and newspapers and even in books, the last without her knowledge and consent. People do take advantage of simple folks like her and Lita.

Though Lita may not be "the flavor of the TWO VERY OLD/BS

Raise your hands to save the company \$\$\$, and your team from 5 a.m. calls.

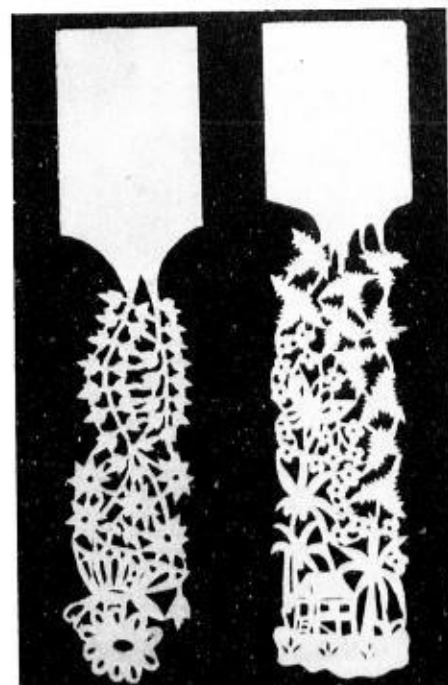
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SOME OF Lita's intricate designs



INQUIRER president greets young guests at the party thrown for streetkids.

PHOTOS BY NINO ORBETA AND EUGENE ARANETA

Sunday LIFE STYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: Inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Do they know it's Christmas?

OF COURSE, THE KIDS know. But some Filipino kids can't get into the spirit of Christmas because of severe material lack.

Their needs—and wishes—are basic, nothing luxurious. Like kids their age and anyone else, they just want to celebrate Christmas simply, meaningfully.

The INQUIRER Lifestyle staff joined a number of Metro Manila's urban-poor kids in a Christmas party at the PDI parking lot organized by Hands-On Manila, and got to know their hopes, dreams and wishes this Yuletide.

As expected, poor children don't need much to celebrate Christmas. Their wishes are simple, even heartrending.

So why not play Santa to these kids and help grant their wishes? Contact Don Don Marquez of Hands-On Manila at 8437044 or 8435231.

The opportunity for you to live and fulfill the Christmas message is there. These kids and their innocent and sincere wishes offer you the chance to give with a heart.



INQUIRER's Chito de la Vega, party organizer, starts the fun rolling.



GIFTS are distributed to each kid

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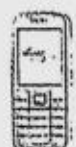
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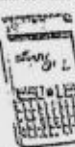
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Do they know it's Christmas?

Let poor Pinoy kids know it's Christmas by playing Santa to them



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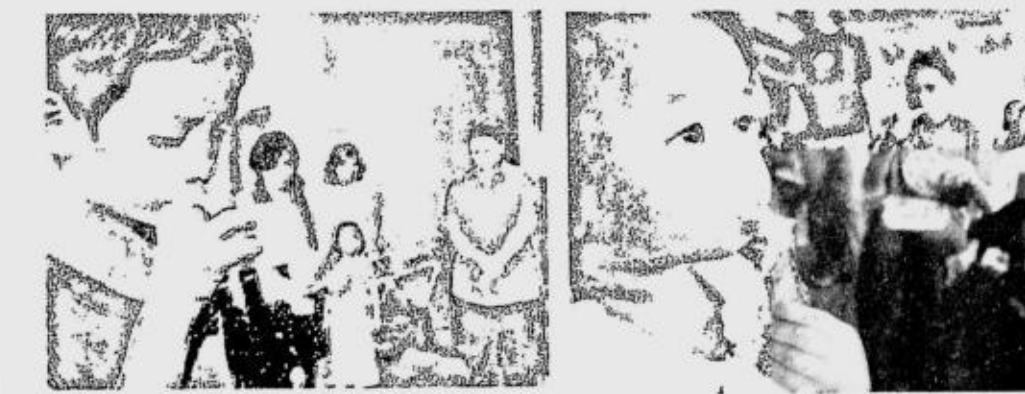
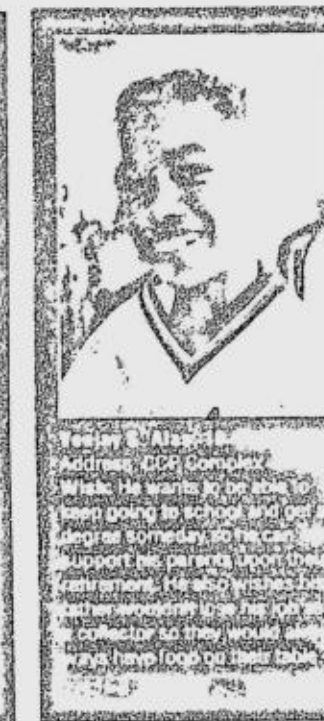


SCENES from the Christmas party held for street children by INQUIRER volunteers, with Hands On Manila's Breakfast Club (CCP and Guadalupe), Snackistas (Sucat, Parañaque), Merienda Mates (Quezon City) and Child Hope Foundation Asia

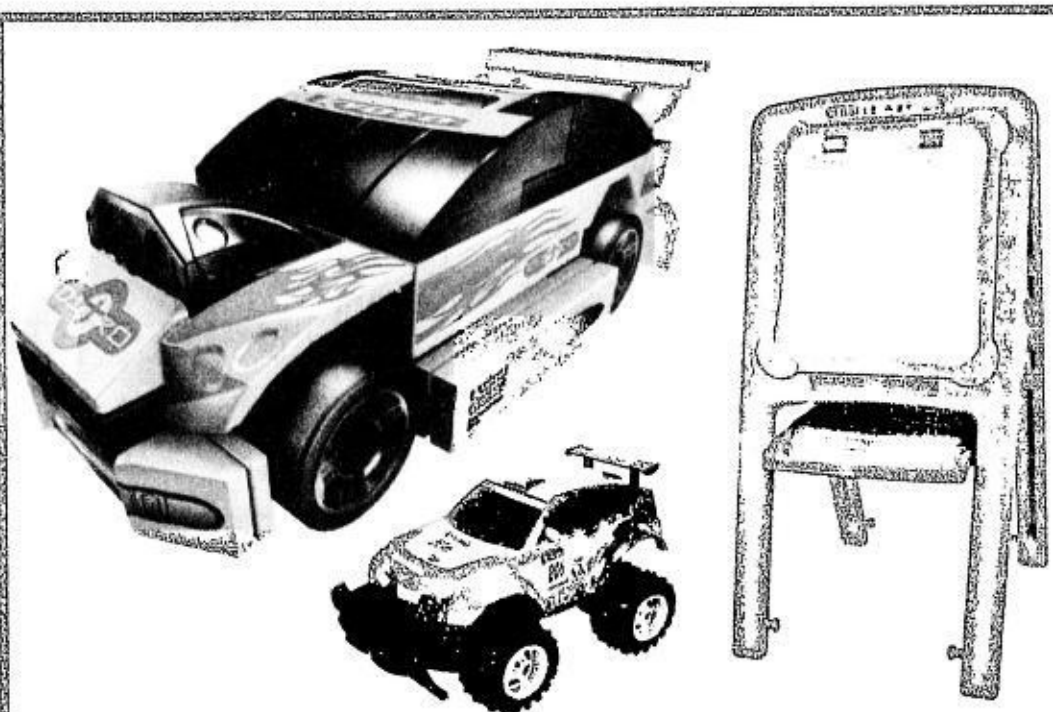


Do they know it's Christmas?

For poor Pinoy kids, know it's Christmas by playing Santa to them



SCENES from the Christmas party held for street children by INQUIRER volunteers, with Hands On Manila's Breakfast Club (CCP and Guadalupe), Snackenistas (Sucat, Parañaque), Merienda Mates (Quezon City) and ChildHope Foundation Asia



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Gifts for babies and toddlers include potty trainers, rattles and teething toys; and kiddie vehicles, activity toys plus Toys "R" Us exclusives such as Dr. Sam's medical kits, Bruin stroller and pram toys, 3-in-1 Lil Artist learning easel and Kolcraft umbrella stroller.

Girls can have items from Dream Dazzlers, Animal Alley, Fast Lane, Just Like Home, as well as an assortment of licensed brands.

Techie and educational toys include Lego, Imaginarium blocks, Junior PDA, Nintendo DS games, Gameboy Advance SP, TV games and Playstation 3.

Gifts for the whole family include Pavilion games, Uno Stacko and Cards, Tabletop soccer game, board games and more.

The active and sports-minded may like Keep Fit Hoop, badminton sets, Hop Along Pony and Soccer Game sets.

Other items include capsule toys, squeeze-balls and puzzles, sports watches, flower magnetic petals, You & Me soft rag dolls, and Geoffrey character throw pillows.

World's biggest . . .

From page C4

out of stocks.

For 2007, consumers can look forward into more men's and children's footwear, Morastico said.

Already there are the Monsters, a glow-in-the dark variation that's an instant hit among kids. Due to persistent demand, Gonzalez said next year, Havaianas will also be sold at the Children's section of the Rustan's Department Store with an interactive area.

Gonzalez said Filipinos can look forward to more designs tailored exclusively to the local market. Since it will be Havaianas' 45th anniversary next year, expect more limited- and special-collection lines as well.

Slimmer Havaianas are also forthcoming, with thin, sexy straps that give them an ultra feminine look. Looking more like sandals than slippers, she said the design works well with skirts and flirty dresses.

Cultural

Part of the success of Havaianas in the country is cultural, said Gonzalez. Filipinos, she said, have always wanted to wear slippers. It was just a matter of finding a respectable brand that delivered what it promised.

In a country where it's practically summer all year long, flip-flops are the year-round footwear, hence the need to change stocks every two months. (Other countries change stocks every three to four months.)

Design inspirations are culled from the world over. Morastico said Havaianas employs a team to do trend research in Milan,



STRAPS take on a new shape in this collection.

Japan, Thailand, India, Morocco. The new collection of Russian-theme was inspired by the matryoshka dolls.

"We try to [infuse] a little from each market into the collection. We always want to be ahead of everyone else. You may be seeing a few of the 2007 collection, but our production-design team are years ahead already," Gonzalez said.

Morastico also said there are more than 200 colors to choose from in 60-65 different lines the company churns out in a year. That's not including the limited-editions and those produced for the Philippines alone.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

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World's biggest flip-flop store opens in Taguig

The new Havaianas outlet at the City Center, Fort Bonifacio, dwarfs even those in Brazil



MARCOS Morastico



ANNE Arcenas Gonzalez

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

NOT ALL FLIP-FLOPS ARE made equal. When it comes to comfort, durability, flexibility and style, nothing comes close to the technology and design behind Havaianas, the brand that's in the shoe closets of at least 500,000 Filipinos, the number growing by the day.

"Havaianas has the edge in the industry in terms of technology for producing the most comfortable rubber slippers in the world," said Marcos Morastico, export sales manager-sandals division for Asia and Pacific of São Paulo Allpargas SA, the manufacturers of Havaianas.



THE HOME of the largest collection of Havaianas footwear in the world is designed by Gil Coscolluela.

Manual labor makes up majority of the production work, he said, ensuring quality in every pair. There are 5,200 factory employees who produce the slippers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are, in fact, 2.5 million pairs produced each year, enough to circle around the globe 55 times.

Morastico added that in-house physical therapists also work round-the-clock to safeguard the workers, especially their hands. Of the eight million work hours chalked up by the factory since its inception, the company has not seen any major accidents.

According to Morastico, Havaianas has also made a pact with Brazil's Institute for Ecological Research to donate 7 percent of net profits from the Havaianas/IPE line to the institute's conservation programs.

To meet growing Philippine demand, Havaianas, the Brazilian flip-flops that made it fashionable to wear the unassuming slippers to just about any occasion, opens its fourth All Flip-Flops outlet at the City Center, Fort Bonifacio. This move officially makes the Philippines home to the world's largest collection of Havaianas footwear, beating even the retail outlets in Brazil.

It's like stepping inside an eye-candy museum. The products on display are enclosed in glass to allow those that go flip over flip-flops, the diehard Havaianatics, enough room to drool and gawk before fighting over the last pair available. (That scenario actually happened once.)

"No other country has this many types of slippers than the Philippines, that's for sure. In Asia, the Philippines ranks No. 1 in sales," said Morastico.

The Philippines has chatrooms devoted to everything Havaianas and blogs with uploaded images of the latest finds. Here, reservations are made months in advance, and a beeline forms at retail stores during product launches, with styles selling out in a mere day or two.

When the brand came out with a cherry design, a clientele called up to make reservations on all colors because the slippers were a perfect match to her Louis Vuitton Cherry Murakami bag. Years ago, prior to the Havaianas fever, the thought of pairing the humble slippers with a luxury brand would have been preposterous.

Filipino-inspired
Designs, in fact, are sometimes developed by the company upon suggestions received through e-mail from Filipinos, Morastico said.

The brown slippers, for instance, was created after Filipinos demanded for the color. No regrets for listening to consumers, though, as the color is now part of the regular collection and it's one of the hottest selling.

The Havaianas Filipinas, those that carried the national flag designed exclusively for the local market, even received its fair share of clamor from Overseas Filipino Workers abroad that enterprising Filipinos sold them on e-Bay at \$50, said Anne Arcenas Gonzalez, managing director of Terry SA, the company that brought the brand into the country.

And there have been over-the-top suggestions, she said. A client at one time wanted to know if it were possible to put the picture of her boyfriend on the slipper design.

The current bestseller is the limited-edition Christmas collection. Retailing at P995, the metallic pair comes with a slipper bag, a limited-edition print, metallic key-chain and a card. It makes for an ideal present, said Gonzalez, that many branches are fast running

WORLD'S/C3

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MONSTERS, the glow-in-the-dark line for kids

**Divine four**

American tenor David Miller, Spanish baritone Carlos Marin, French vox populi Sebastien Izambard and Swiss tenor Urs Buhler are collectively known as Il Divo, and they're exactly that—divine. Their latest compact disc "Slempre"—sizzling with cuts like "Nights in White Satin," "Without You" and "Have You Ever Really Loved a Woman"—makes one hot gift. But you might as well double (quadruple?) the pleasure by adding tickets to the long-awaited "Il Divo-Live in Manila" concert on Jan. 20, 8 p.m., at the Philippine International Convention Center Plenary Hall.

Call Concertus at 8172431 or 8132617 for tickets to the show. Or sign up for a Smart Infinity Plan 5000 and get a Nokia N73 and two VIP tickets to the concert. Citibank credit card holders get an exclusive 10-percent discount when they buy their tickets through TicketWorld.

Sunday LIFE STYLE

Make a list and check it twice

Running out of ideas on what to give this Christmas? Here is a guide to help you shop for even the naughty and not-nice. We've included luxury items that will keep your loved ones stay connected yet unwired, as well as more affordable items



There's room to grow at The Residences at Greenbelt

At The Residences at Greenbelt, enjoy life's little comforts with a variety of spacious units that can address your family's every need.

A landmark project of Ayala Land Premier, The Residences at Greenbelt is a luxurious and exclusive enclave set amidst dynamic Greenbelt. With its choice location at the heart of Makati, The Residences puts a wide array of leisure, dining, and entertainment choices within easy reach.

The Residences at Greenbelt is designed not only to give residents direct access to the Greenbelt lifestyle, but also to extend the same premium experience within its very confines. The Residences at Greenbelt offers a wide array of spacious units that can fit any lifestyle. The one-bedroom and one-bedroom loft units are ideal for successful singles. On the other hand, the two-bedroom, three-bedroom and penthouse units have generous spaces that it can be a comfortable abode for families who need ample space for their growing kids. For example, bedrooms in the units are laid out thoughtfully to allow flexibility. The children's room in a typical 2-bedroom unit can comfortably fit two beds and a play area. A spare bedroom in a 3-bedroom unit can easily be converted into a nursery for a growing brood. One can also be certain that kids - and their playmates - would love hanging out in the airy kitchen.

Beyond the unit, a family can also enjoy life's pleasures at The Fifth, a 5,000 sqm podium of full-scale amenities of The Residences at Greenbelt. It's your choice: begin each morning with a dip in the lap pool, celebrate your kid's birthday at the rooftop party deck, keep fit at the gym, rejuvenate at the spa, or just enjoy being amidst nature at the Zen garden. And if the kids want to catch a movie, or if retail therapy is in order, the world-renowned Greenbelt Lifestyle Center is just a breath away. Wine and dine in one of the many restaurants and cafes, visit the Ayala Museum and Greenbelt parks, or splurge on luxury brands in the numerous shops and boutiques - Greenbelt offers all these exciting options for everyone. Relatives and friends will enjoy visiting your home, be it to enjoy the amenities of your home, or the different attractions of Greenbelt.

And with shaded walkways directly connecting The Residences at Greenbelt to the Makati Central Business District, getting to work is such a breeze. A number of prestigious educational institutions are also close by, so with the office a short stroll away, there's plenty of time to bring the kids to school.

With spacious units, exciting amenities, and direct access to the country's only lifestyle center, families can find their ideal home at The Residences at Greenbelt. Buyers can rest easy in their choice with Ayala Land Premier's unmatched track record for delivering high quality and innovative developments. And with Ayala Property Management Corporation's unique leasing tenancy and the premises' management services, your unit is in good and trusted hands.

The Residences at Greenbelt offers luxury, privacy, and ultimate comfort. It truly embodies Ayala Land's trademark legacy of enhancing the residents' quality of life with its portfolio of prime locations, superior customer care, and property management.

For more information about the units at The Residences at Greenbelt, call 728-7000, e-mail ask@ayalalandpremier.com or visit www.theresidencesatgreenbelt.com. New model units are available for viewing at the 3rd level, Greenbelt 3.



LIVE IN A

IT'S FINALLY SHOWING MY HUSBAND BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR, 'AVING MOVIE TICKETS.

LIVING ROOM INTERIOR LUXURY

UNIVERSE

AFTER FRESHENING UP FROM AN AFTERNOON AT THE GYM,

WE STILL HAVE TIME FOR A QUICK BITE AND A FEW ROUNDS AT TIMEZONE.

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I LOOKED AT MY FAMILY AND I KNEW -- OURS HAD BEGUN AS WELL.

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The Residences at Greenbelt is Ayala Land Premier's stunning 3-tower residential development, located right at the heart of the prestigious Greenbelt Lifestyle Center, and directly integrated with the Makati Central Business District. It not only provides residents with direct access to all the finest establishments in Greenbelt, it also offers highly exclusive amenities at The Fifth. This development will be home to those who thrive in a world of cutting edge style, gourmet cuisine, global business, and everything that speaks of the high life.

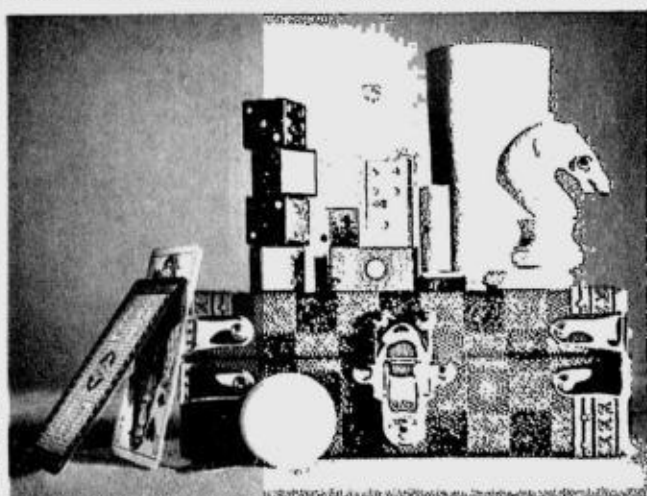
The Manila Tower, the third of this exclusive community, finally completes the story of The Residences at Greenbelt. Experience the real high life now.

THE RESIDENCES AT GREENBELT



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Make a list and check it twice



Playful travel companions

The company that has accompanied stylish travelers for more than 150 years has designed cases for the favorite games of travelers. Now with a collection of six games—chess, draughts, backgammon, cards, dice and dominoes—Louis Vuitton applies its creativity not only to the case but also to the contents, elevating popular pastimes to heights of elegance with precious materials and exquisite craftsmanship. The name of the game and its pictogram in bold red, white and yellow are found on each case, while inside, securely stowed in compartments lined with red microfiber, are all the essential elements of play.

Available by order through Louis Vuitton (Philippines), tel. 8899430. Visit www.louisvuitton.com



Power to the people

Today is the last day of the big sale to mark the opening of the newest Power Mac Center flagship store in Greenbelt 3. Everything Mac is going at 20-percent off.

Go and grab the requisite must-have iPods and check out the iMacs, Mac Minis and MacBooks plus all the sleek accessories—docks, speakers, displays, keyboards, headphones and more. The 20-percent discount can be availed for cash purchases of up to P100,000 per transaction while a 15 percent discount is offered for credit card transactions.

Power Mac Center also offers free delivery in Metro Manila of Apple products for purchases ranging from P100,000 and upward up to Dec. 24.

The new Power Mac Center flagship store is at 2/F Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Other branches are in SM Megamall, Power Plant Mall, SM City North Edsa and the SM Mall of Asia.



Doubly elegant

The use of the logo as an intrinsic element of design in watches, among other things, started in the 1940s when Bulgari introduced the double logo engraved on the bezel. This classic watch has been enhanced with even more detailed finishings. All new models of the well-known classic are enhanced with more detailed finishings. New bracelets are hand-finished with either satin or polished treatment. The Bulgari shop is at L1, Greenbelt 4, Makati Avenue, Makati.



Ultra edition

Samsung's Ultra Edition cuts an incredibly slim figure in the market for mobile phones. Choose from the sleek series of Ultra Edition 6.9 (X820), The Ultra Edition 9.9 (D830) and the Ultra Edition 12.9 (D900), Samsung's new style- and technology-forward mobile phones.

Samsung takes "mobile communications" to a whole new level with a fusion of art and technology. The Ultra Edition demonstrates Samsung's vision for the future of mobile communications in terms of technology and design. The Ultra Edition 6.9 (X820) leads the handset pack, boasting the world's thinnest profile of only 6.9 mm. The Ultra Edition 9.9 (D830) is a brand-new clamshell handset that is 9.9 mm thin. And topping off the Ultra Edition line is the 12.9 (D900), the world's slimmest slider with a depth of only 12.9mm and a picture-perfect 3-megapixel camera.



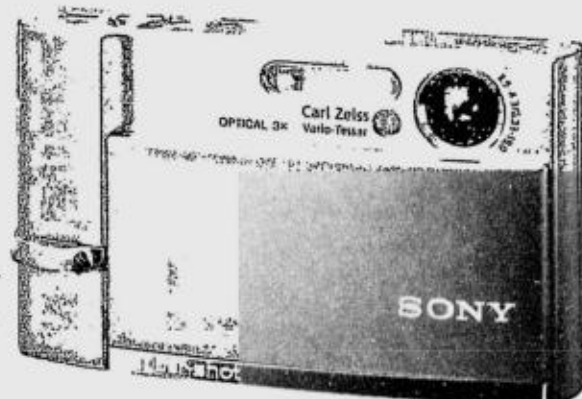
Camera ready

For the photography enthusiast, give a digital wonder called the Sony Cyber-shot T-50. This one is equipped with lens that provide close-up shots of subjects in both movie and photo mode up to three times in greater details.

Available in black, silver and red, the 7.2-megapixel Cyber-shot T-50 employs the unique and flexible AF function for easy focusing on subjects before capture with just a tap on the screen. It maintains the sharp image capture that prevents blurred images caused by both user's hand movements and subjects in motion and this applies also to movie recording.

This camera's high stamina provides long period of fun shooting without recharging for a full day, taking approximately 400 images.

Sony products are available at all Sony Squares, Digital Solutions Plazas, and authorized dealers nationwide. Call 8787600 or 0917-8077669; e-mail info_sph@ap.sony.com; or visit www.sony.com.ph.



Health and art in one package

Give healthful gifts this season and pack them in a work of art.

Healthy Options has gift boxes and bags with the theme "The Art of Giving" by watercolorist Edgar Doctor. The painting is on the single bottle wine bag, small and large gift bags and the Organic Harvest, the Healthy Options version of a traditional gift basket.

Shoppers can get a free art calendar for a minimum purchase of P2,000. Aside from Doctor's painting, the calendar features feng-shui-inspired mixed-media creations by Lizanne Uyachaco.

At Healthy Options, you can create your own gift pack from its various products or give gift cards in P200, P500 and P1,000 denominations.



For the coffee lover

If you haven't been to a Tupperware party lately, you'll be delighted to know that the popular plasticware company has come up a fun and trendy collection of coffee mugs. Featuring designs inspired by Latin America, where some of the world's finest and most flavorful coffee beans come from, the mugs are ideal, of course, for java addicts but will please tea and cocoa drinkers as well.

Each mug's big 300-ml capacity allows for satisfying servings of a favorite beverage. Available in four tasteful designs: Café Du Lait, Café De Vida, Café Paradiso, and Café Del Rey, each has a matching cover that doubles as coaster to prevent moisture from reaching the table surface.

Besides looking good, these mugs are heat and cold-resistant, shock-proof, heavy-duty, and dishwasher-safe. They are made of non-toxic food-grade material and have excellent thickness for greater stability.

To order, contact your nearest Tupperware distributor or call 8885521, or visit www.tupperware.com.ph.



From the art

Ceramic artist Lanelle Abueva-Fernando has created a limited-edition vase for the Creative Responsive Infants by Sharing (Cribs) titled "Alaala ni Nanay."

When you buy or receive an "Alaala ni Nanay" vase, you become part of a process that brings poor, abandoned children closer to the care and love of a mother. Cribs provides shelter for abandoned babies and abused young girls.

Lanelle is well recognized for her accomplishments in ceramic pottery. She runs the Lanelle Abueva-Fernando Pottery Studio and the Crescent Moon Café in Antipolo. Her unique dinnerware and other home accessories grace many hotels, restaurants, resorts and distinguished homes. She is also part-owner of Pottery Exchange, a hobby school for the arts and crafts.

Lanelle has put a Filipino touch on the Cribs vase by embossing a traditional embroidered piña cloth on its surface as a symbol of the special, caring qualities of the Filipina mother.



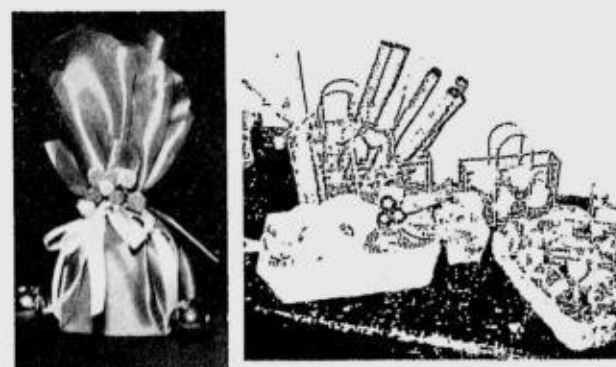
From food to aquarium

The new Tiny Planet Shop and Tiny Kitchen School offer locally made items as gifts. They include scents and candles, placemats and napkins, *papier maché*, stationery and albums.

Also available are original wreaths and miniature décor for pet cages.

From the Tiny Kitchen Cooking School comes gift sets for children like aprons, pot holders and miniature cookie cutters.

The shop and school are at 31-A Scout Tobias, Quezon City. Call 4102279, 0916-5165035 and 0918-7022125.



JOY TOYS

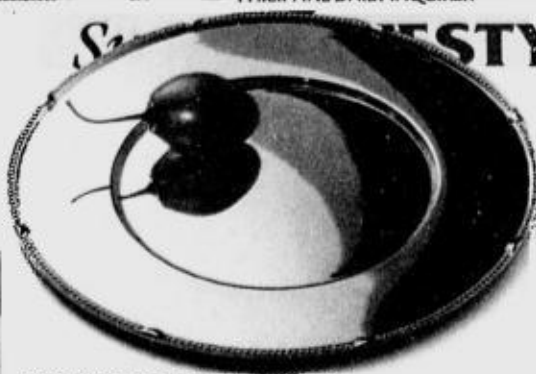
(left) My Scene Bling Bling girls Barbie, Nolee, Madison and Chelsea are ready to party. (Below left) Polly Pocket makes a celebrity entrance with the Pollywood Limo-Scene. Available at SM malls, Toy Kingdom and all leading department stores nationwide.



Silver season



ALTA set



FRANZOSISCH-PERL underplate

By Alex Y. Vergara

SINCE THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS synonymous to parties, it's quite common for Filipino families to bring out their most expensive silverware this time of the year. After making do with inexpensive flatware for the longest time, expect them to dine in style if only on Christmas and New Year's Eve as they try to impress guests.

They seldom use their silverware in the mistaken notion that using it often would hasten its wear and tear. On the contrary, said Ulrich Ackermann, director of Robbe & Berking, silver gets tarnished when not in use.

"Sulfur in the air reacts with silver," he explained. "Over time, it turns yellow or brown when not in use."

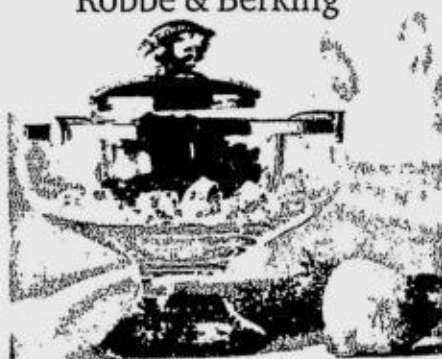
Ackermann was in Manila recently as part of his Asian tour to promote Robbe & Berking. Based in Flensburg, Germany, the company has been producing premium silver and silver-plated cutlery and table accessories for 132 years now.

The brand's top clients include such hotel chains and cruise liners as Ritz-Carlton, Kempinski, Four Seasons, MS Europa, Seacloud, Seabourn Pride and Seabourn Spirit, among others. It also graces a good number of Michelin-rated restaurants all over the world. It's exclusively sold locally at Rustan's.

Ackermann was surprised to find out that not a few Filipinos put off using their best cutlery until they have "special" guests. As far as wear and tear is concerned, he said, it doesn't pay to lose sleep over a few minor scratches for they add character to any silver utensil.

"Silverware is such a pleasure to use," he said.

Silverware gets tarnished when not in use, says Ulrich Ackermann, director of premium German cutlery brand Robbe & Berking



ALT-CHIPPENDALE

"It makes your every meal special. Why only use it three to five times a year when you can use it every single day?"

At the same time, however, he cautioned homemakers from using Scotch-Brite, steel wool or any abrasive cleaning agent on their silverware.

Dishwasher-safe

Robbe & Berking products, he assured, are dishwasher-safe. No dishwasher? Not to worry. A soft sponge, plain dishwashing liquid and lots of water will do the job just as nicely.

If you still can't bear the thought of using your precious silverware on food other than ham, Angus beef, quiche and caviar, there's another way to maintain its luster while you wait for that red-letter day.

Robbe & Berking sells special anti-tarnishing pouches that can each easily fit around 12 pieces of silverware. Made of cotton, each pouch comes with a bottle of anti-tarnishing liquid to ward off

unsightly stains.

For the longest time, the family-owned company (head honcho Oliver Berking belongs to the fifth generation) did business in Germany. It was only in the 1980s when it started expanding to Russia, the rest of Europe, North America, the Middle East and finally Asia.

"We had to postpone our Asian expansion until we were able to figure out how to position our products in a region where chopsticks are still widely used," said Ackermann.

At one point, it found itself competing with close to 70 competitors in Germany alone. With the advent of outsourcing, said Ackermann, almost all its rivals have transferred to other countries, particularly Brazil and China, except Robbe & Berking.

"We don't outsource," he said, "not even a single spoon. We'd rather do everything in Germany to ensure that the product's quality doesn't suffer. Most of our workers learned their skills from their fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers."

Despite having been around for generations, the brand has only a little over a dozen silverware designs to offer. These include ornate Ostfriesen, tactile Martele, minimalist Alta and iconic Art Deco, among others.

Unlike most brands, said Ackermann, people at Robbe & Berking see to it that the company's designs are different from one another "from the handle down to the blade." Not a single item is interchangeable. Since it's not a one-size-fits-all approach, the company has had to invest in several machines to cater to specific styles.

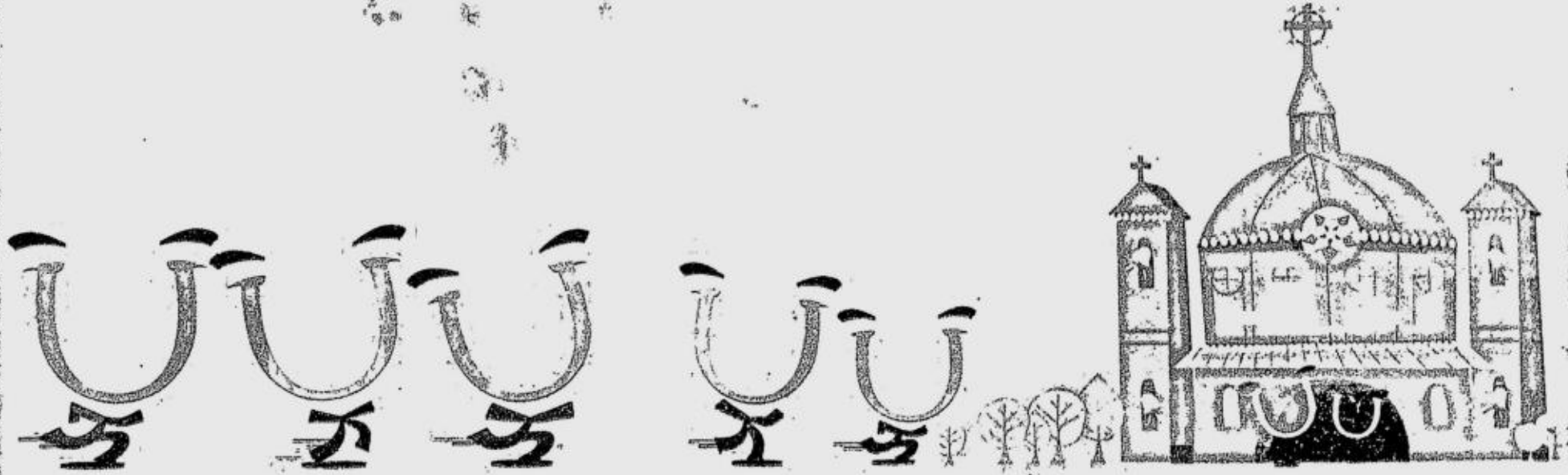
It goes without saying that one has to pay a premium to get her hands on a set of Robbe & Berking. A starter set, which consists of a five-piece setting for six people (knife, fork, spoon, teaspoon and salad fork), costs around 2,500 euros or P150,000.

"What's a few more pesos to acquire good taste?" said Ackermann. "What Mercedes, Hermes, Cartier and Mont Blanc are doing in their respective businesses, we're doing for the silverware market."

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

This Christmas,
choose color.


CARONIA
— nail polish —



With more energy, mas happy mag-simbang gabi kaya mas happy ang Christmas.

MULTIVITAMINS
ENERVON



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Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

LUNA-VILLALON

Anthony Jay Villalon, son of Alexander Sr. and Teofila (nee dela Rosa) Villalon, will wed Althea Emilia Luna, daughter of Ruel and Edna Varquez Luna, Jan. 7 at the Chapel of Transfiguration, Caleruega, Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas. Reception will follow at Veritas Hall in Caleruega. Ding Marquez designed the bridal gown.



TAN-JAVIER

Luis Tan Jr., son of Luis Ong Tan Sr. and Elisa Arnado (deceased) will wed Joanna E. Javier, daughter of Rev. Flaviano Jr. and Anna Mae Javier, Dec. 21 at Fernwood Gardens, QC.

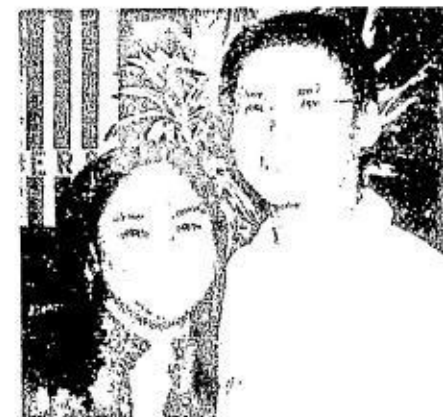
PINEDA-RILLO

Alexander Pineda, son of Justice Undersecretary Ernesto and Virginia Pineda, will wed Reimarie Rillo, daughter of engineer Reynaldo and Dr. Marita Rillo, Dec. 23 at St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City. Reception will follow at Bellevue Hotel, Muntinlupa City.



LIM-PEQUET

Edward Lim, son of Lim Tiao Go Sy and Lim Giok Hon Lily, exchanged vows recently with Sherry Ann Pequet, daughter of Oscar and Susan Pequet, at the Shrine of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life in Reclamation Area, Pasay City. Reception was held at the Grand Ballroom, Century Park Sheraton Hotel.



GARCIA-GARIBAY

Dong N. Garcia, son of Edgardo Sr. (deceased) and Helen Garcia, will wed Jack P. Garibay, daughter of Daniel and Aurora Garibay, at 4 p.m., Dec. 20, at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan. Reception will follow at Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila.



JOHNSON-BAYHONAN

Mitchell Johnson, son of Donna Elaine Johnson, will wed Melody Bayhonon, daughter of Melecia Pasco Bayhonon, Dec. 29 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Ma-a Road, Davao City. The bride will wear a gown designed by Ross Sevilla. Reception will follow at the Davao Convention and Trade Center.



ANINON-ZAMORA

Antonio Aninon Jr., son of Antonio Sr. and Vidala Aninon, will marry Glenda Zamora, daughter of engineer Glicerio Jr. and Dr. Lucita (nee Presas) Zamora, at 8 a.m., Dec. 24, at Transfiguration Chapel, Caleruega, Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas. Reception will follow at Sonya's Garden, Alfonso, Cavite. The bride will wear a Zeny Rosellon's creation.



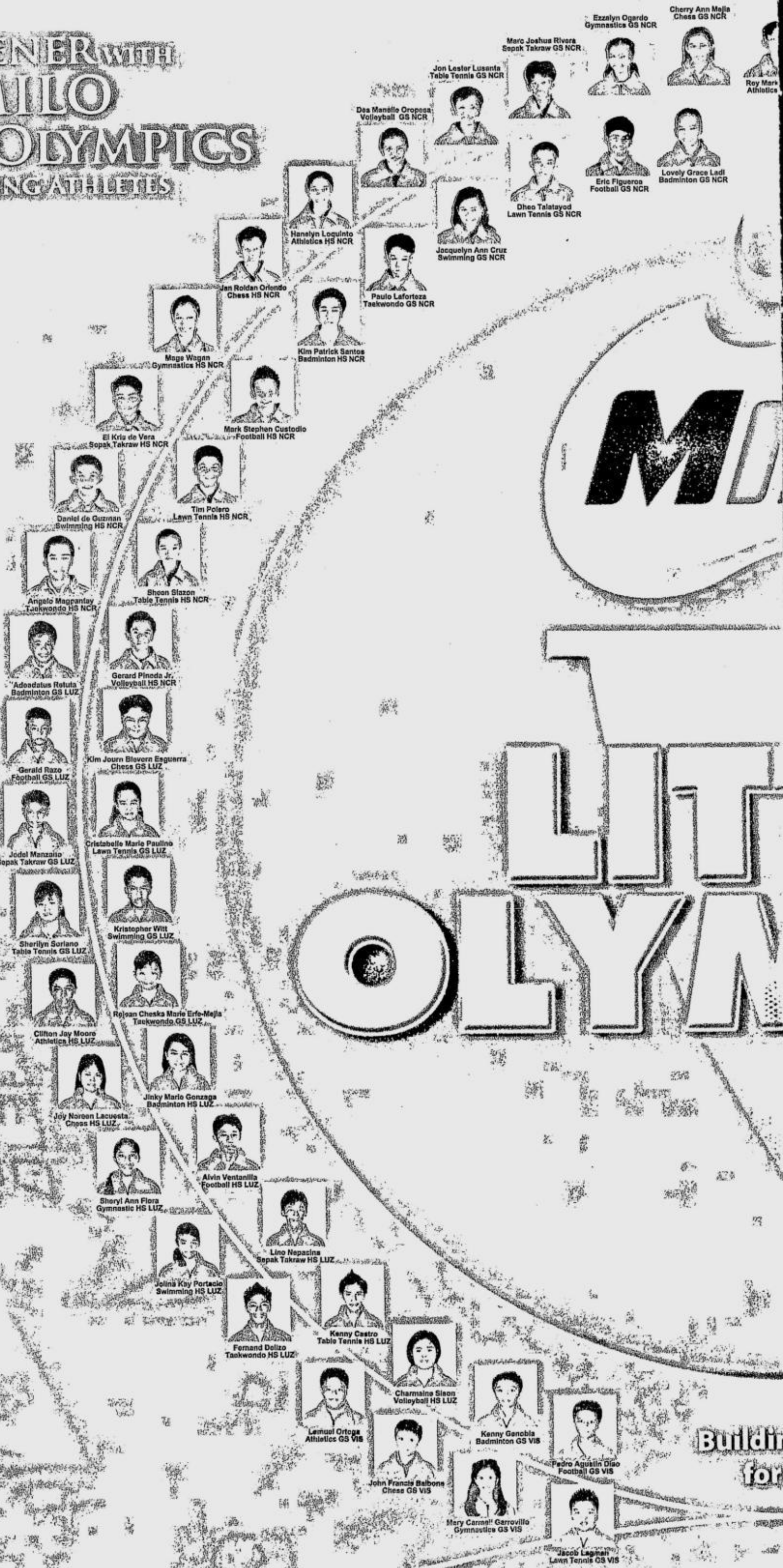
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Banosa
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Adam Garrido
Swimming HS MIN

Charlotte Galon
Table Tennis HS MIN

Nikki Paola de Dios
Lawn Tennis HS MIN

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Cherry Mae Ang
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Arjie Magallanes
Sepak Takraw GS MIN

Francis Edilbert Alcantara
Lawn Tennis GS MIN

Janier Callino
Football GS MIN

Julia Anne Eslo
Gymnastics GS MIN

James Ray Lapido
Badminton GS MIN

Gretchen Olanman
Chess GS MIN

Kevin Sta
Volleyball HS VIS

Vergitt Magtoto
Athletics GS MIN

Geoffrey Apas
Table Tennis HS VIS

Rose Ann Solazar
Taekwondo HS VIS

James Barzon
Sepak Takraw HS VIS

Loren Dale Estavos
Swimming HS VIS

Melle Angelle Doroy
Lawn Tennis HS VIS

Michael John Go
Scrabble HS VIS

Benedict Luis Arriola
Football HS VIS

Carlo Centza
Gymnastics HS VIS

John Roy Denalag
Badminton HS VIS

Yuri Casas
Chess HS VIS

Kenneth Gasim
Volleyball GS VIS

Era Vivien Poras
Table Tennis GS VIS

Lindley Fran Navaja
Athletics HS VIS

George Ian Buhayan
Sepak Takraw GS VIS

Cris Daryl Yap
Taekwondo GS VIS

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Swimming GS VIS

Orly Albano
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PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

Gifts of shoe shine boxes

AFTER TRAINING FOR five months, 22 poor boys aged 11-15 are going to get shoe shine boxes on Jan. 7 at the Knights of Columbus headquarters on Benigno Aquino Street, BF Homes, Parañaque. They were taught by Tony Medina, a director of K of C and president of the Faithful Heroes and Shining Times Inc. Every Saturday for five months, the boys would go to Our Lord of the Resurrection Parish

and learn the rudiments of shining shoes and attend catechism classes of the Legion of Mary. Last Dec. 9, during the 11 a.m. Mass, the boys were among the 110 boys and girls who took their First Communion. Sounding like a father to all of them, Tony happily told me that the boys looked good in their white T-shirts and black pants. Now they know more about Jesus, according to Tony who said the best Christmas adults could



THE AUTHOR (center) receives a plaque of appreciation from Fr. Diwane Cacao and Nida Lopez for acting as anchor on the Radio Veritas program "Santo Expedito."



BETTY Roxas-Chua of Rosary for Life Philippines flanked by book author Edgar de Vera and Fr. James Reuter

CELEBRATING PRIESTS

December 15
Rev. Msgr. Esteban U. Lo, L.R.M.S.

December 16
Most Rev. Luis Antonio G. Tagle, D.D.

December 17
Rev. Msgr. Roberto C. Canlas

December 18
Most Rev. Jesse E. Mercado, D.D.

December 19
Rev. Fr. Nolan A. Que

December 20
Rev. Fr. Mario S. Sobrejuanite, SSP

December 21
Rev. Fr. Dave T. Concepcion

December 22
Rev. Fr. Genaro O. Diwa

December 23
Most Rev. Bernardo C. Cortez, D.D.

MEGAMALL

give them was to teach them how to earn a living by shining shoes.

When I asked Tony how he knew how to shine shoes, he told me that, growing up poor in Masbate, he shined shoes when he was not in school.

Supreme Court Justice Leo Quisumbing will attend the awarding of shoe shine boxes. He was the inspiration for the St. Tarcisus Shoe Shine Boys project.

The K of C, Legion of Mary and Faithful Heroes Shining Times, Inc. will provide the boxes, uniforms and shoes. Lawyer Jun Davide also contributed to the project.

Why St. Tarcisus? The young saint was martyred by pagan soldiers at 14 when he protected the Holy Host inside the catacombs. Tony says it will truly be a memorable Christmas for the kids when they receive their shoe shine boxes.

Grand Knight Feliciano Agrante and past GK Max Lawengco will lead in the awarding. The new officers took over Oct. 28.

What does K of C do? In every parish, the K of C is tasked to defend the Catholic Church. Tony says, in the Resurrection Parish, the K of C holds values formation seminars and retreats and campaigns against drug abuse among the young.

It is a fraternal and beneficent society of Catholic men founded in New Haven, Connecticut in

1882.

It is now established in every state and territory of the United States; in every province of Canada; in Newfoundland; the Philippines; and other countries.

Centennial

The Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) began its yearlong Centennial Celebration in November.

Simultaneous activities were held in the CICM Provincial House in New Manila, QC; and in CICM schools: Saint Mary University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya; St. Louis University, Baguio City; University of St. Louis, Tuguegarao, Cagayan; St. Louis College, San Fernando, La Union; and St. Louis School, Mandaue, Cebu, as well as other CICM mission stations around the country.

The theme of the CICM-RP Centennial celebration is "100 Years of CICM Missionary Presence in the Philippines: Remembrance and Revitalization."

Through the celebration, the CICM hopes to make more people aware of the order. It also wants to express its gratitude to people and communities for the opportunity to do mission, revitalize missionary spirituality among CICM and mission partners, intensify and renew mission and vocation animation and shape a dynamic future direction for CICM

in the Philippines.

Call the CICM Provincial House at 7245402, 7276932, 4108160 and 4149373.

Pain management

Dr. Bernard R. Canlas (UST Medicine Class 1991), a staff physician and Continuing Medical Education (CME) director of the Institute of Pain Management in Florida, United States was guest speaker and lecturer in the recent First Congress of the Association of Southeast Asian Pain Societies at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza.

He is the son of Ben P. Canlas of the Rotary Club of Metro Sta. Mesa District 3780.

Dr. Canlas, former director of the Pain Management Center of St. Luke's Medical Center, QC, spoke on Cancer Pain Management, "Time to Revise the WHO Ladder." He also conducted a workshop on "Interventional Pain Management for Low Back Pain."

He has a Subspecialty Certification in Pain Medicine from the American Board of Anesthesiology.

Holy Rosary book

Fr. James Reuter, SJ, celebrated a beautiful and solemn Mass during the launch on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe of the book "Mysteries of Salvation History" by Edgar de Vera at the Manila Manor Hotel.

Fr. Reuter said De Vera took the responsibility of spreading the word of God through his books that were being published by Totus Bookstore. De Vera's books, according to Fr. Reuter, were bridges from soul to soul.

Cutting the ceremonial ribbon with Fr. Reuter was Betty Roxas-Chua, president of Rosary for Life Philippines. Other sponsors were Mona Lacanale of Eucharistic Adorers' League and Cofradia de la Inmaculada Concepcion, through Aurora Elzmeñdi.

Present was Henry Siy of Totus Bookstore who promised to make available good books by Catholic authors. The book is available at Totus, 2/F, Red Ribbon Bldg., Connecticut St., Greenhills.

Radio program

After airing the program "Santo Expedito, Santong Madaling Lapitan" on Radio Veritas every third Tuesday of the month for the past eight months, the Society of St. Expeditus was pleased that the show was now rated No. 6.

The program, which has featured "healing on the air" by Fr. Diwane Cacao, is anchored by yours truly and co-anchored by Ofelia Poblete or Dr. Cora Santiago. It invites devotees who have been helped miraculously by St. Expeditus. Next program is at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 19, on 849 am Radio Veritas.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel



Sydney on the beaten track

Text and photos by Angelina G. Goloy
Contributor

YOU CAN DO IT, MA!" chanted my rah-rah girl as the snaps and clips of a harness sealed my fate, in full view of three other pairs of "parasailors," all yuppies like her. Thus, did I start to "enjoy" my daughter's surprise Christmas present: tandem parasailing over Sydney Harbor. Being the only oldie on the boat (to my daughter's obvious glee), I felt like a sideshow.

If I managed to do as required, that is, "relax, enjoy the view," it was because, for her sake, I willed it. I was even game for a couple of dunks! All things considered, the thrill of the 10-minute daredevil ride was not totally lost on me.

My daughter, a geologist, lives and works in Sydney's North Shore suburbs, about three kilometers from the central business district on the opposite end of the Sydney Harbor Bridge. From her apartment in Cammeray, she walks 20-25 minutes to her office in North Sydney (good exercise) via Miller Street, the main thoroughfare that intersects the street where she lives.

Some afternoons, I'd take a bus to the city, where my daughter would meet me after work, or I'd pass for her at the office and we'd take the train to the city. Just following the locals' tracks became interesting walks.

On my next visit, I did consent again to a bit of heights, though: We crossed the Sydney Harbor Bridge, which took us to parasailing elevation.

No, we didn't do the (walk-on-the-arch) Bridge Climb! We went for a stroll on the

pedestrian lane, from the North Shore to the city. Locals take about 20 minutes, but we took our time, starting off at Milsons Point where the massive concrete stairway leading to the bridge is located.

The 74-year-old bridge is the world's largest steel arch bridge, the arch's peak rising 134 meters above the harbor (180 meters on hot days when the steel expands).

It is not the longest, but it is the widest, with eight lanes for motor traffic, plus two railway tracks, a bicycle lane and two pedestrian lanes on each side, both fenced off from vehicles.

SYDNEY/F2

SYDNEY Harbor Bridge and Sydney Opera House within touching distance from Milsons Point in the North Shore

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There's more to the Australian city than parasailing over Sydney Harbor

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER bonding 100 meters in the air. Photo was taken from the boat by another parasailor awaiting his turn.

From page F1

We took the lane on the eastern side, with a novel view of the other famous Australian icon, the Sydney Opera House jutting out to the Parramatta River.

Descending the bridge stairway on the other end, we emerged in The Rocks, the city's historic section, referred to as the birthplace of Australia.

Tour

I began my Miller Street "tour" on her street corner, where stands the Cammeray marker, which gives the Aboriginal origin of the suburb's name, Cammeraygals.

About two blocks up the street is St. Leonard's Park, the 40-acre center of what became the suburb of North Sydney. Within the park is the North Sydney Oval, a rugby league venue.

Some of the sport's local stars are graduates of the Catholic high school for boys



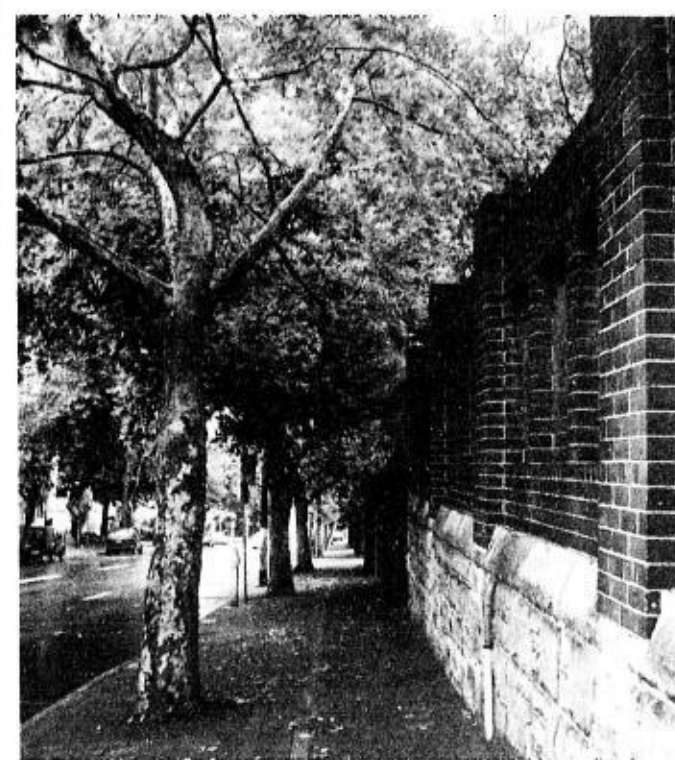
MORNING scene on Miller Street



INDEPENDENT Theater was established by Australian thespian born in Manila.



UNDER the famed bridge on the Milsons Point side



SHADY sidewalk outside Monte Santo Angelo School on Miller Street

across the street, Marist College North Shore. Three other schools located on Miller Street are North Sydney Boys High School, Wenona School and Monte Santo Angelo College, a Catholic high school for girls.

Conveniently situated for students is Stanton Library, the central library of the North Sydney Council local government area. It houses the North Sydney Heritage Center, said to have the best local history resources in the state of New South Wales.

Next to the library is the civic park of the North Sydney Community Center, where arts and crafts and fresh produce markets are held monthly. At the park entrance is the 1897 Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain, built in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the monarch's ascendance to the throne. (Cities across Commonwealth nations erected their own commemorative fountains.)

Much of Miller Street, from St. Leonard's Park all the way to the CBD, is lined with trees, conveniently shading pedestrians' way, although making the ambulant street sweeper work double time, especially on a windy day.

Like border trimmings on fine stationery, the leaves enhance the picture-pretty of sandstone buildings like the North Sydney Council Chambers and St. Mary's Church, which is said to be a mere tent when it opened in 1855.

The Independent Theater, however, stands out because of its unusual maroon-malt-gray facade. Its history, it turned out, is just as colorful. Originally a tram station in the 1880s, the site

became a vaudeville house, a munitions factory and a skating rink, among other facilities.

In 1939, it was taken over by The Independent amateur theater company of the late Dame Doris Pitton, an Australian actor and theater director born—would you believe—in Manila. She staged mostly children's theater and school programs, making the theater a training ground for young Australian actors and playwrights, until it closed in 1977.

Thanks to private foundations, it reopened in 1998. These days it is a venue for "Coffee Concerts," one-hour intimate musical performances, preceded by morning tea.

At the end of my daughter's office block, Miller Street intersects the Pacific Highway, which leads to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and Mount Street. On the corner is the North Sydney Post Office and farther down is Mary MacKillop Place, the chapel-museum memorial to the first Australian saint.

Since the day it became certain that my daughter would be working in North Sydney, I have been surfing the Net and voraciously reading up on the place, as well as practically every city and town interstate and beyond where she goes on field work.

Now every piece of news or photo from her, via SMS, YM, e-mail, transports me to her side. So, my first visit with her was like a dream come true. It's a memory I still replay in my mind every now and then and wouldn't mind reliving... well, OK, maybe except the high-flying stunt.

Cebu goes to Manila

THREE CEBU-RELATED events in quick succession brought me to Manila.

One was the impressive piano recital of Rudolf Golez at the Little Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The performance was part of the CCP's Filipino Artists Series.

The threat of a typhoon did not deter the record audience. Welcoming guests and the general public was Rudolf's glamorous mom, Dr. Rafaelita "Oche" Pelaez Golez of Cagayan de Oro and Cebu. Also present were Rudolf's younger brother Alain and his pretty wife Tanya.

Very much in evidence was Msgr. Rudolf "Rudy" Villanueva, Cebu's music genius in residence. He is also a prolific writer. Msgr. Rudy was commissioned by the Golez family to compose a Toccata for the recital.

I had the luck to sit beside Msgr. Rudy who relished every note Rudolf played, not just his composition. One moment he whispered, "It is a performance like this that restores one's faith in humankind."

Other works magnificently rendered by Rudolf were Sonata in B-Flat Major by Mozart; Beethoven's Sonata in F-Minor Major (also known as Appassionata); Stairway of the Devil by Ligeti; and Liszt's Sonata in B-Minor, the finale. We lost count of the curtain calls.

After the recital, Rudolf and his mom flew to Greece for a piano competition; after that, Vienna,

CEBU CEBU Jaime Picornell

where they caught a series of events that open the annual pre-Winter Music season.

Monique's show

My next trip to Manila was for a weekend at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel for the Monique Lhuillier fashion gala. Most of the Cebuanos stayed there, splendidly received by the new GM, Greg Dogan (his wife Kathy Dizon is a Cebuana), and Joy Wassmer, director for communications.

Cebu is immensely proud of Monique. In every interview she says she was born in Cebu and learned about graciousness and style from her parents Michel and Amparito Lhuillier. We might add her grandparents as well—the late Henry and Angeli-ta Lhuillier.

The night before the grand event, Michel and Amparito hosted an elegant dinner at the Shangri-La's Shang Palace for family members and Cebuanos who flew to Manila for the occasion. Among them were Gov. Gwen Garcia and Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama. Mayor Tommy and Margot Osmeña arrived the next evening.

There was much applause when Monique breezed in after the rehearsal, with husband Tom Bugbee and their son Jack

Nicholas in the arms of Tom's mom, Dora Bugbee. Monique went from table to table kissing and embracing brothers, sister, aunts and close friends.

When the whole Manila affair was over, Monique and Tom, with their baby, came to Cebu for a breather. And to spend precious time with her maternal grandmother, Doña Nita Llamas, who lives here with daughter Anna Marie and Johnny Dizon.

It was a chance for Monique to visit the tomb of her abuelita Angelita, who passed away in September.

Premio Zobel

The third visit to Manila was for a book launch at the Ayala Museum under the aegis of Georgina Padilla y Zobel (Sra. De Luis Mac-Crohon) who came from Madrid for the purpose.

The book "81 Years of Premio

Zobel" is all about the coveted literary prize for excellent literature in Spanish by Filipino authors.

Author of the book is professor Lourdes Brillantes whose surname best describes her. She received the Premio Zobel in 1998 and shortly after wrote a book in Spanish about the prize. There was a clamor for an English version.

In her speech, Dr. Brillantes said she came across more material and a wealth of photos too precious to ignore. Their enrichment of the book may be why it has taken more time to publish than expected.

Some Cebuanos have received the Premio Zobel. Another past winner was Buenaventura Rodriguez, an uncle of mine, who wrote just as well in English and Cebuano as he did in Spanish. My wife and I were happy to be there for the occasion.

Also from Cebu were



PIANIST
Rudolf Golez

Jesus Cuenco. When Cuenco was the Senate president, he authored the law requiring the teaching of 24 units of Spanish in all colleges and universities of the Philippines.

During the program emceed by Maritoni Ortigas, eloquent speeches were delivered by Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz and the Philippine Ambassador to Madrid Joseph Bernardo.

More than eloquent because it came from her heart and with quick Spanish wit, was that of the book's publisher, Georgina. She gave a glimpse of her family's life in what seemed like a distant past. Premio Zobel was instituted in 1920 by her grandfather Don Enrique Zobel de Ayala.

Georgina's mother, Doña Gloria Zobel, and her father, Don Ricardo Padilla, kept the award's torch burning, passing it on to children Georgina and Alejandro. Now who is going to give them, specially Georgina, a prize?

Those who got a copy of the book cannot put it down. It is available at the Ayala Museum, Filipinas Heritage Library and other outlets in Metro Manila.

It will be available in Cebu soon. Readers of PDI's sister paper, the Cebu Daily News, will be duly informed. How about a Cebu launch? That will have to be in May, says Georgina who is all set to leave and spend Christmas in Madrid. Amigos de España en Cebu, whose president is Amparito Lhuillier, will definitely prepare for it.



FAMILY picture. From left: Michel Lhuillier, Cebu City Vice Mayor Mike Rama, Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia, Monique and Tom Bugbee, Amparito Lhuillier, Dora Bugbee with Jack Nicholas

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Miles program has treat for online bookers

Skywards members will enjoy savings of 10 percent off when they book an Emirates reward ticket online before Feb. 28, 2007, on www.emirates.com. Providing the benefit of redeeming Miles from home or office, the online booking facility also enables travelers to check real-time flight status, select meal preferences, request visas, choose preferred payment and ticket delivery method, as well as customize their trip using a wide host of additional travel preference options. The offer is open to all Skywards members flying to Emirates' destinations and cannot be combined with any other ongoing reduced rewards offers. Skywards, the frequent flyer program of Emirates and Sri Lankan, offers three tiers of membership—Blue, Silver and Gold—with each membership tier providing exclusive privileges. Gold and Silver members are entitled to wait-list priority for all classes of travel, priority check-in and airport lounge access. Members earn Skywards Miles, one Skywards Mile for every mile they fly on Emirates, Sri Lankan or partner airlines, or when they use the program's designated hotels, car rentals, financial, leisure and lifestyle partners.

Skywards Miles can be redeemed for a wide range of rewards, including free tickets on Emirates or Sri Lankan and other Skywards partner airlines, flight upgrades, hotel accommodation, excursions and exclusive shopping.

New Year promo

Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila offers a New Year Countdown rooms promotion. People who will book deluxe and Club Sofitel rooms Dec. 31-Jan. 1 get the third night free. Two kids 12 years and below stay for free and get complimentary one-hour use of the Plaza Kids Club. The package also includes buffet breakfast for two at Spiral and complimentary use of the 24-hour Sofitel Sports Club and Spa. Advance reservations required. Rooms are subject to availability. The offer is not applicable with other promotional programs, packages, group rates or meeting and convention packages.

Get 'high' this season

If you want to get away from the hustle and bustle of the holidays without traveling long distances, try the Seven Suites Hotel Observatory on Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City. Avoid the noise and fumes of New Year's fireworks displays in Metro Manila by enjoying it from a distance.

Seven Suites has ample parking space. Its multipurpose hall, with entertainment facilities, can accommodate over 200 people and is a suitable venue for parties and other activities.

Seven Suites Hotel Observatory is at Hollywood Hills Subdivision, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City. Call 6820330, 6822076 or 4906407; or e-mail sevensuites@cravingsgroup.com.

tipolo City. Call 6820330, 6822076 or 4906407; or e-mail sevensuites@cravingsgroup.com.

Boracay hotel undergoes makeover

Henry Chusuey, chair and president of the Boracay Regency Beach Resort and Convention Center, has announced ongoing programs to improve the place's facilities and services.

He said this was in line with the resort's continuing effort to ensure that guests "experience divine luxury" during their stay.

Boracay's first underground beach disco bar, Wave, is now being renovated and is expected to reopen this month.

Now called MO2 Wave, it will be run by MO2 Management Group of Iloilo. New additions include an open-air area for alfresco dining and partying, the new Alfons Bar and additional KTV rooms for videoke fans. A coffee shop is also being built.

The Boracay Regency Garden Wing will be finished in December. With an Asian Tropical motif, it will have 90 units, including 18 suites with direct access to a swimming pool.



direct access to a swimming pool.

The Boracay Regency Lagoon is a 120-room structure with water as central theme. All rooms are expected to open up to a swimming pool. Regency is the first hotel to get a triple A rating in the whole white beach area and has the widest beach front. Call 5231234.

EXPERIENCE "divine luxury" at Boracay Regency.



MACAU GETS MORE FILIPINO TOURISTS

Macau's tourist arrivals reached 20 million this year. Director Joao Manuel Costa Antunes of the Macau Government Tourist Office said China remained the largest source market, accounting for nearly 54 percent of arrivals. Aside from China, Macau's top 10 tourist markets are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Korea, United States, Singapore and Thailand. From January to October this year, over 139,000 Filipinos visited Macau, a 90-percent increase over figures for the same period last year. The Macau Government Tourist Office in the Philippines is at 11/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati; tel. 8122595 and 8130947. E-mail mgtophil@info.com.ph.

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Program raises US\$1.28M for Unicef

"CHANGE FOR GOOD," THE in-flight fundraising program of Cathay Pacific and the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), has collected US\$1.28 million in 2005-2006.

The program asks Cathay Pacific passengers to donate spare change in any currency. The money is used by Unicef for various projects in different countries. It will also go to the airline's Wheelchair

Bank, a foundation for children with neuromuscular disease. Cathay Pacific pioneered "Change for Good" with Unicef in 1991. Over the past 16 years, it has raised almost US\$9.5 million.

EMILY'S POST Emily A. Marcelo

Happy but confused wife

DEAR EMILY,
This letter is coming to you from the Middle East—from one happy but confused wife.

My husband started working here in April, and my two children (aged 12 and 5) and I followed him in July. He's an engineer and I am a stay-at-home wife.

Everything is fine except that I am starting to have problems with my hands. They feel numb or there is so much pain due to my very bad arthritis. I do all the chores here.

Now I am confused, unable to decide if my kids and I should stay here or go back to the Philippines.

In Dubai, the upside is that my family is intact and we live well. Our apartment and utilities are free and my children go to the best school. The downside is we're cooped up inside our little world with no place for socializing like restaurants or for relaxing and shopping as in malls. And everything is expensive.

My husband has only one day off, on Friday, and he prefers to spend it resting and sleeping.

I am bored and scared and worried that my husband won't be able to keep this good job because, despite his yearly contract, he would be at the mercy of his employers.

I want to go back home. The upside is I can have help in the house, save enough money to build our house, work part-time and be able to talk to my friends whenever I want to. The downside is my fear of dengue and being separated from my husband. What if something happens to him?

And what about my life... the pain I have in my hands? I am an engineer myself but I feel that my life and very self are gone. I am tired of doing things over and over again.

I sometimes regret I didn't have a career considering that I finished engineering and even passed the board exams for teachers. I am creative and could make beaded wallets and bags. My plans are to put up my own tutorial center and a gift shop when I have the money.

Am I being selfish by having these thoughts? I love my family so much but I should love myself, too, right?

TROUBLED WIFE

There's a saying it's hard to put a good man down. And a good woman, too!

You're intelligent, creative and have much to offer—the reason you're bored and unhappy with your life in Dubai. You're also undergoing a malaise called homesickness, which needs plenty of time to overcome.

You're also being too hard on yourself. It's been only five months! If you're a baby, you haven't even started to walk yet, so to speak.

First, analyze the urgency of your frustration. The pain in your hands must be immediately treated because this is making your life subconsciously hellish. There are many alternative medicines for arthritis and you needn't suffer unnecessarily.

Second, accept the fact that life in Dubai, for all its affluence, is entirely a world apart from the carefree one you know at home. They're almost as different as night and day.

Rein in your angst if you care about your health. It's been said that the cells in our body are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts.

Just remember that there will always be tradeoffs in life. You can never have everything at once. Something's got to give—always. Tap your inner resources and be the person you want to be despite the seemingly arid landscape around you—literally and figuratively.

Allow your creativity to break out and blossom despite the boredom that seems to be the order of the day for you.

Forget the "happy times" you remember of home. Memories have a way of distorting reality. They may seem more exciting than they truly are. You and your husband decided to go abroad for your family's future, right? It's always greener on the other side. And you will probably feel that way, too, if you uproot yourselves again.

There'll be no end to your quest for peace and happiness if you don't resolve to make this work. You have to decide that you'll be happy wherever your family is—regardless of whether or not there are facilities for the fun you're accustomed to.

What if you actually decided to come home and discovered in hindsight that Dubai wasn't so bad after all? That the "fun times" you've been reliving so much in your mind was just a mirage? What then? Remember—hindsight is always 20/20! Make this a true learning experience for you and your family. There's nothing more broadening and breathtaking in scope and experience than travel and living abroad. Open your mind to the wealth of possibilities at your feet. Don't throw it away by moping.

E-mail the author at emcelo@inquirer.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to Inquirer. Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

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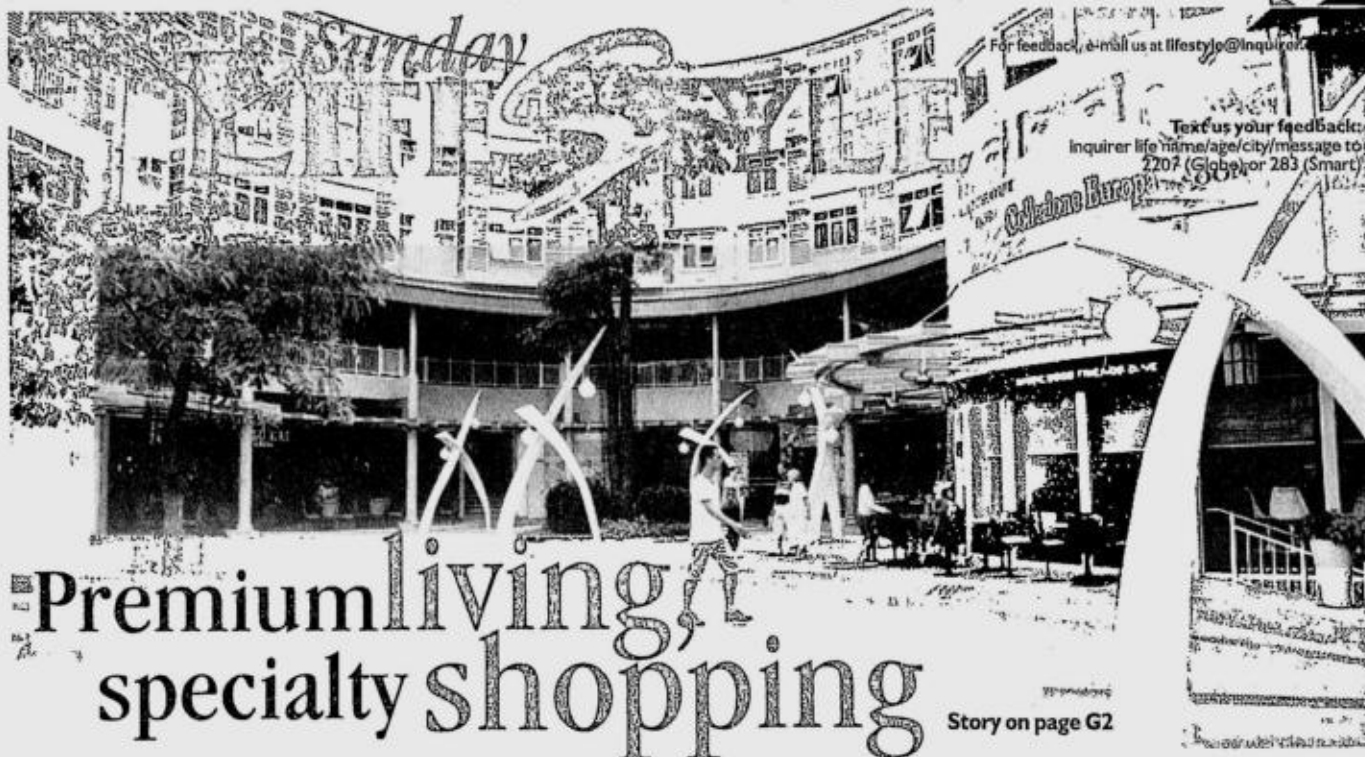
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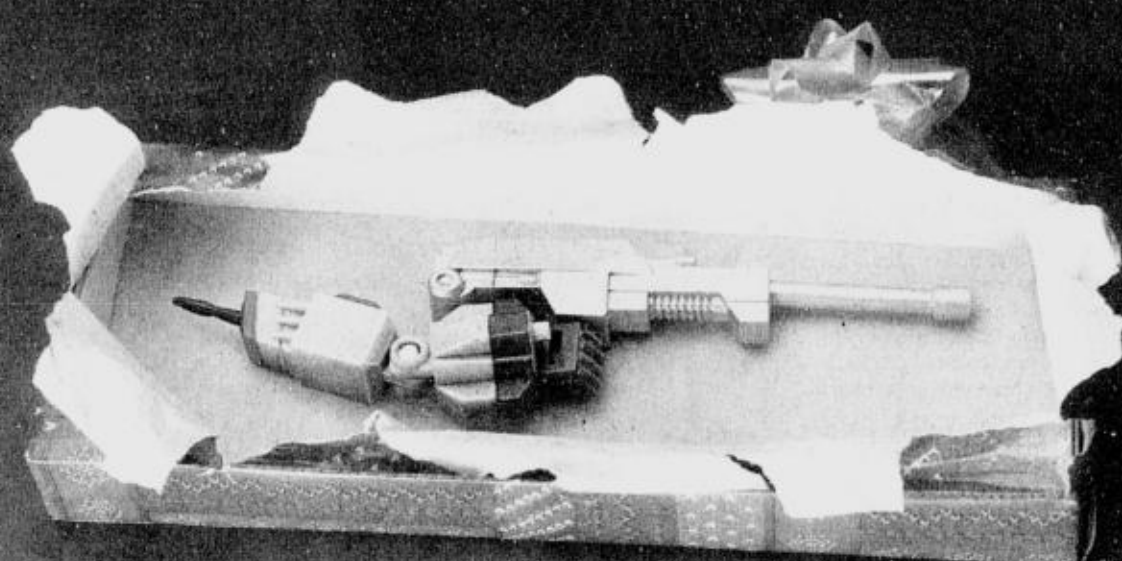
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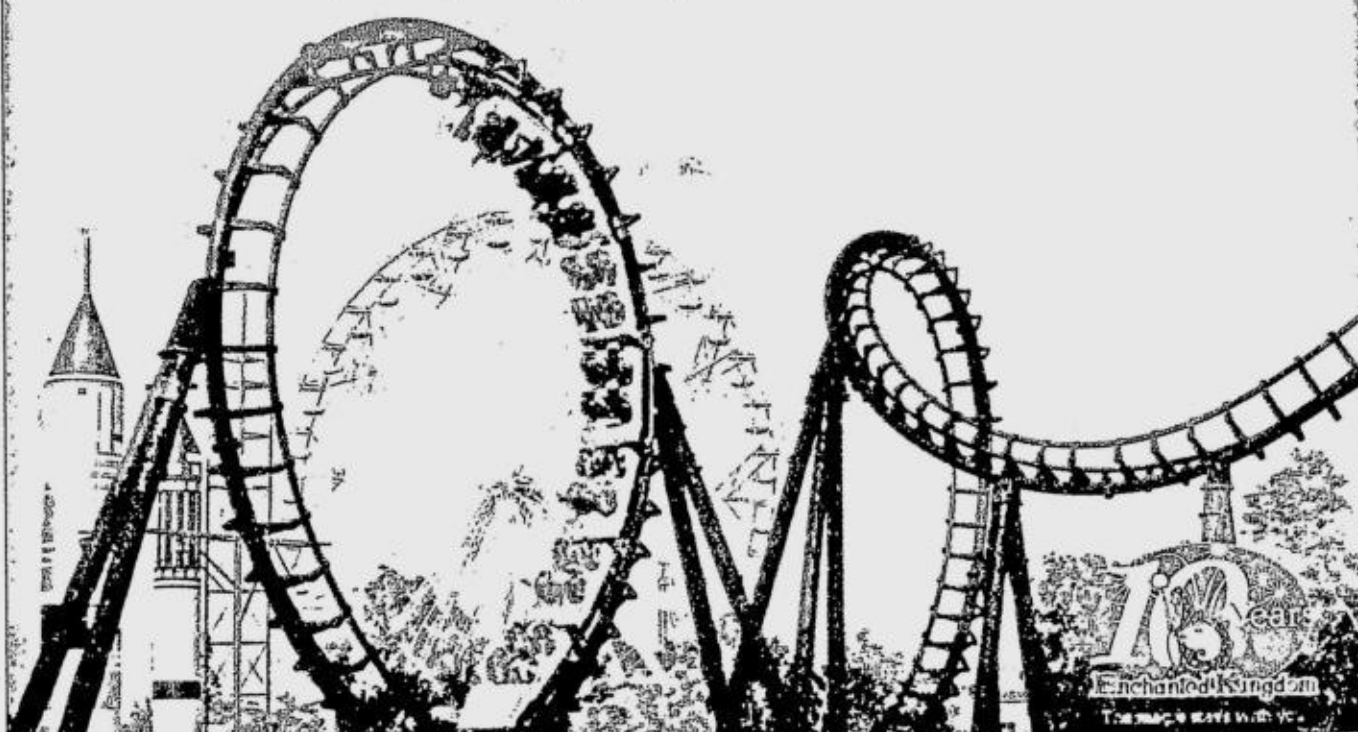
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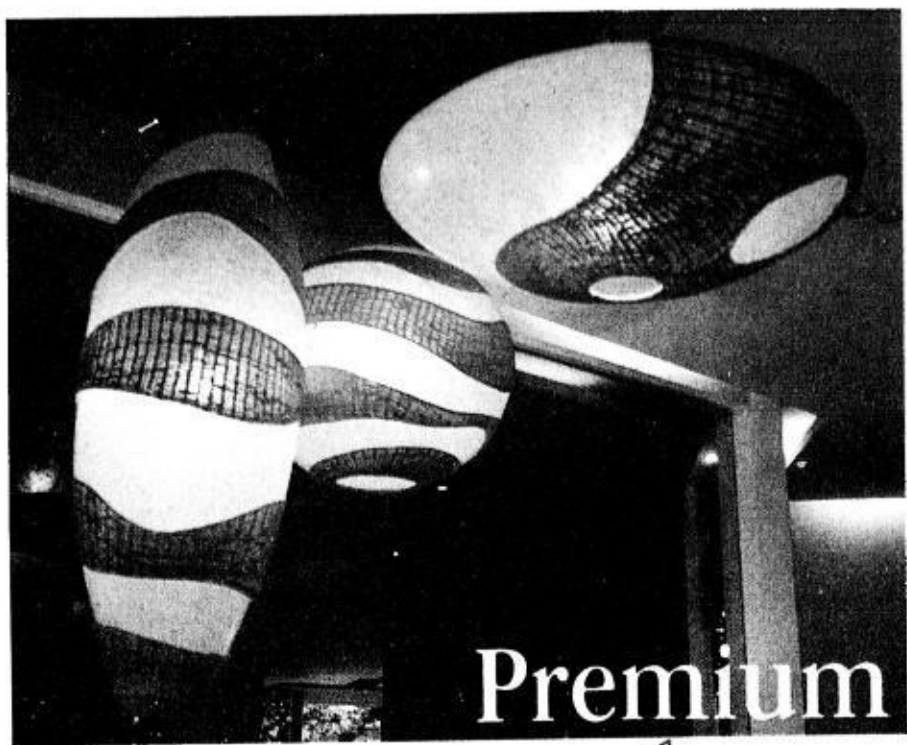
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MOTOKRZR for free."

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MOTOROLA 12 GIFTS
OF CHRISTMAS



PHOTOSHOP? You needn't sweat it. Leave it to Blow-up Babies to create extraordinary portraits of your baby—or yours, or your beloved pet's, too—in full production setup, complete with costumes and props. Just pick a theme and they'll handle the rest.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLOW-UP BABIES



Premium living, specialty shopping

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

THE FILIPINO'S DAILY hectic and hurried modern lifestyle now demands that everything must be within easy reach of the urban dweller.

Hence, the trend of building medium- to high-rise homes that include dining and retail outlets literally right at the residents' doorsteps. No braving the horrendous traffic for that sudden midday sugar craving, and no wearisome episodes vying for that parking slot for a late-night shopping fix.

The concept for Serendra, Bonifacio High Street, Ayala Land's new development in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, isn't only to provide these living conveniences to the property's inhabitants, but also to offer an alternative retail experience to other urbanites who shun the claustrophobic human traffic in the bigger malls, especially in the rush for holiday shopping.

There are several familiar shops in Serendra's lineup, but don't expect to see a motley of the same stores you'll find in, say, its neighbor, Market! Market!, also an Ayala-owned mall (Serendra is right across it, by the way).

Apart from a more intimate shopping experience, the property has chosen some specialty shops that can only be found here. Ergo, more unique finds.

Note that Serendra is only on its soft opening. Shopping will be in full swing by early next year.

Vintage clothing, footwear and accessories can be found in **Peppered Cherry**. The shop is

There are several familiar shops in Serendra's lineup, but don't expect to see a motley of the same stores you'll find in, say, its neighbor, Market! Market!

the showroom of sorts for several young designers who create one-of-a-kind pieces for those hankering for items beyond the cookie-cutter mold.

Next door is **Mantra**, where women will find colorful Asian-inspired fashions—pailletted tunics and beaded wraparound skirts—at reasonable prices.

Smack right between these two fashion stores is **Luna**, a lively little nook that has a wonderful selection of "functional art"—handcrafted jewelry and home accessories.

Owned by the same women behind The Bead Shop, Luna is a showcase of some independent local and international artists. The Californian jeweler Jessica Lee's pieces made from sea glass are shown alongside David Urso's sterling silver creations. Urso, a New Yorker, embeds natural spices and herbs into his resin jewelry. Likewise, there are some quirky leather bags from a Thai designer.

There are also beach-inspired woodcrafts and small furniture from Sandcastle, made by a mother-and-daughter team, and stoneware pottery from Clemens Wurth. Prices for Luna's collection can run up to the five figures.

Fab lighting fixtures

T.O.P. (That One Piece) is the place to go for fabulous lighting fixtures. Owned by a couple involved in the export trade, the store has a wide selection of quality pieces made of indigenous material like *abaca*, *ting-ting* and raffia.

Specialty mechanical clocks—floor (grandfather's clock), wall-mounted, mantle and table pieces—can be found at **Hermle**. This store has an impressive selection of movement clocks, made by the eponymous German company founded in 1922, including intricate handmade wooden "cuckoo" clocks. It also has some unique chess sets, sure to be conversation pieces.

Other home accessories can be found at **Pharaoh**, which has Egyptian rugs and other home accents, and **Finesa**, a retailer of Indonesian accessories.

According to feng shui, 2007 is the year of the Fire Boar. Shoppers can get advice at **World of Feng Shui** and purchase so-called "enhancers" to improve their luck in the coming year.

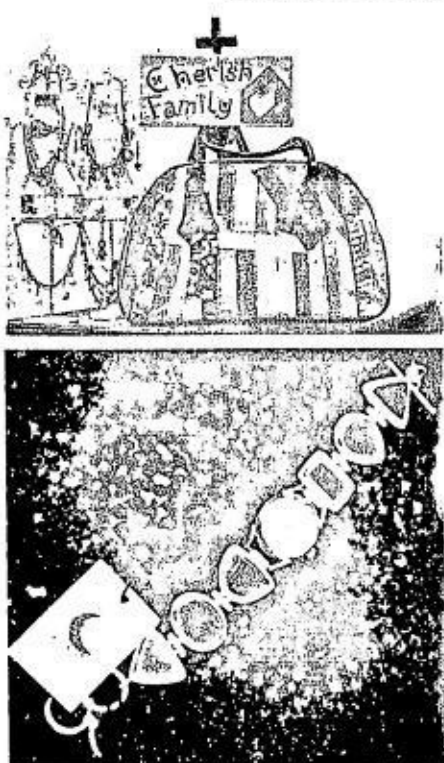
Nearby is **A Different Bookstore**, for a wide selection of reading materials. This is possibly the bookstore's biggest branch, with two levels offering the latest bestsellers—and with a coffee shop to boot.

There are two places in Serendra devoted to kids and kids alone—well, something to keep the little ones busy while Mommy has her nails done at **Nail Tropics**. There's the play school **Gymboree**, and right across it is **Blow-up Babies**. Honey, they don't shrink kids here. The latter does the exact opposite.

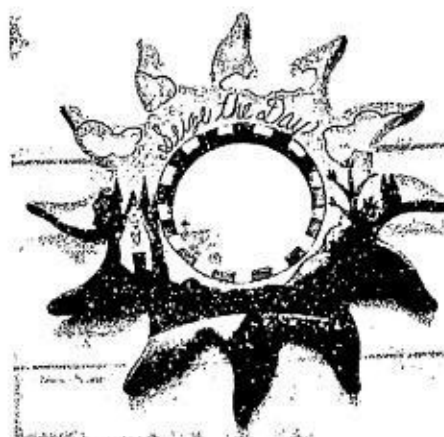
Blow-up Babies is a unique photo studio specializing in full-production shoots—themes, costumes, props—to make your kid's portrait extra-special and memorable. Recently, the studio has added photo services for the *barkada*, the entire family and, why not, the family's beloved doggies and kitties.

For serious art buyers, there are three art galleries in this property—**Art Verite**, **e Gallery** and **1/of Gallery**—showcasing the works of Philippine visual and literary artists. **1/of's** inaugural show, for instance, presented the illustrations of Elmer Borlongan, "The Rocking Horse," based on a story by Palanca winner Becky Bravo.

Need more cash for a take-away boxful of goodies from **Cupcakes by Sonja**? No worries. **BPI** is just nearby.



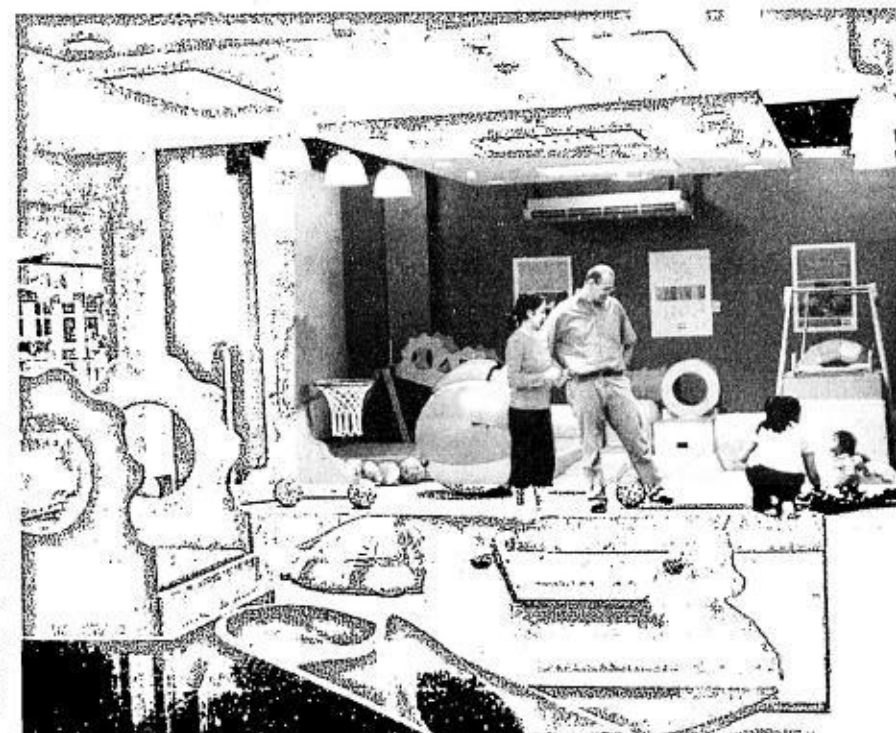
UNIQUE jewelry, bags and fashion accessories from indie international artists at Luna. Below are one-of-a-kind handcarved wall accents, also from Luna.



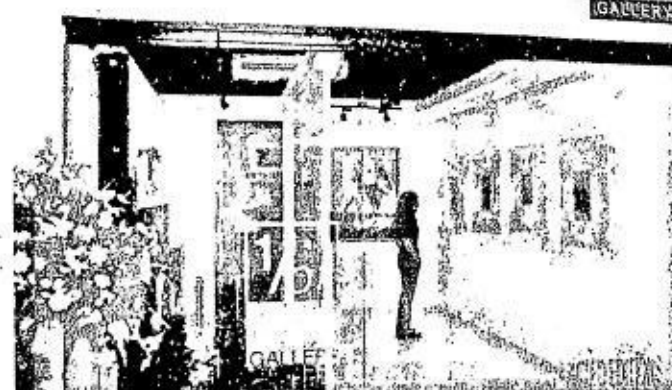
FOOTWEAR from Peppered Cherry



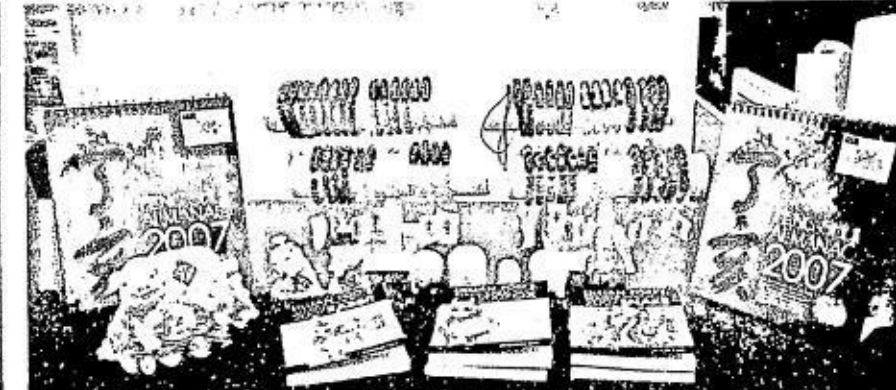
MANTRA sells a merry mix of Asian-inspired apparel and jewelry.



THE WORLD-RENOWNED Gymboree play school, for kids aged 0-6, opens its sixth Philippine branch at Serendra.



1/OFF Gallery's curtain-raiser is Elmer Borlongan's collection of illustrations (above right) based on a story by Palanca-winning writer Becky Bravo.



PREPARE for the Year of the Fire Boar with a visit to World of Feng Shui.



2006 Bulgari holiday collection



2006 Gucci holiday collection

A luxurious start to the season



2006 Bulgari holiday collection

GREENBELT 4, IN COOPERATION WITH American Express Bank and Ayala Land Premier, ushered in the holiday season with the presentation of fall-winter collections from luxury brands at its lobby.

Models showcased latest items from the holiday collections of Bulgari, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Hugo Boss, Salvatore Ferragamo, Charriol, Bottega Veneta and Tod's, DKNY and Burberry.

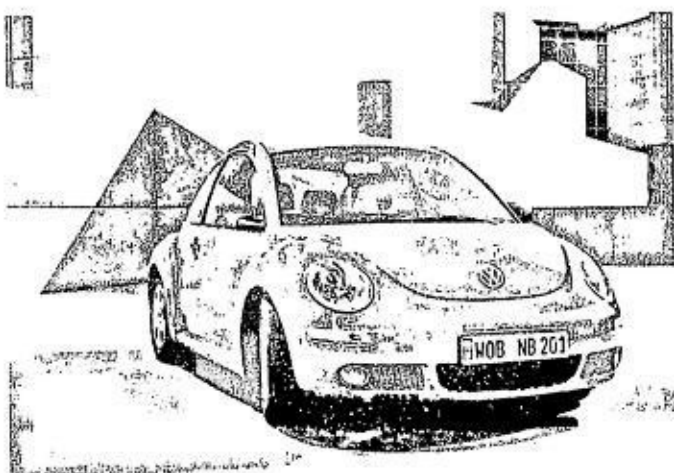
The Las Piñas Boys Choir performed popular Christmas hymns.

Hosting the event were Ayala Malls Groups' vice president and deputy group head Rowena Tomeldan and senior division manager Myrna Fernandez; Stores Specialists, Inc.'s general manager Elizabeth Quiambao; division manager marketing management for Ayala Land Premier/project development head of One Serendra, Melissa Gil; AVP/head of ALP sales Tess Bloom; Grace Limjap, card marketing head of American Express Bank; Bulgari's general manager Mario Katigbak; and Louis Vuitton's Rhea de Vera.

Guests included Tessa Prieto-Valdes and husband Dennis, Anton San Diego, Randy Ortiz, Henri Calayag, Ana Rocha, Barbara Aboitiz, Cristina Bradner and Mia Borromeo.



2006 Charriol holiday collection



THE VOLKSWAGEN Beetle that shoppers can win



KIDS can use their creativity in the Snow Globe Making Contest.

Four ways to win

SHOPWISE HYPERMARKET raises every shopper's chance of winning great surprises four times.

This year, Shopwise goes full circle in spreading holiday cheer to its patrons. It presents four promos to celebrate Christmas.

In the Circle of Cool, shoppers have a chance to win a brand-new Volkswagen Beetle. Have yourself photographed with family and friends with The Global Picture and let your kids explore their creative side with the On the Spot Snow Globe Making Contest, an art workshop and competition just for them.

For New Year's Eve, wear your "spots" and receive sweet treats with the Dots the Day promo.

Shopwise vice president Crickette Tantoco said they decided on the circle as promo theme because many Filipinos associated round objects with good luck.

She added that circles also made striking visuals and lent themselves to rich and varied interpretations.

THE PEOPLE'S POWER



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*Win a gift that's
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in a pear tree.*

*"On the Fifth day of Christmas,
my Moto gave to me,
5 Golden RAZRs and a new
MOTOKRZR for free."*

Tune in to your favorite radio station. Listen closely to Motorola's Twelve Gifts of Christmas and follow the DJ's instructions after the song is played. If you can sing the song then correctly answer the DJ's question, you'll get to win cool Motorola gifts and a chance to win the new Motorola KRZR and RIZR phones! Better than Five golden rings and Four calling birds.



**MOTOROLA 12 GIFTS
OF CHRISTMAS!**



POWERFUL women Soc Niro and Josie Francisco



ELEGANT couple Becky and Chat Veloso



GAUPO shoes partners Emelda and Eric Teng



INQUIRER fashion expert Apples Aberin-Sadhwani and Pond's girl Mutya Laxa



STYLISH ladies Bonnie Santos and Cristina Bradner



SHOE lovers Dawn Zulueta and Mia Florendo

Holiday disco fever

ON THE 12TH DAY OF THE Christmas season, I ushered in the holiday merriment with a swingin' disco-themed party for my dearest family and friends. When I say disco, that means having acid-colored beanbags, lava lamps and disco balls all over the house, and having our Christmas tree embellished with rhinestones, silk flowers and neon ribbons.

This year, aside from our main Christmas tree, my two little girls have their own, smaller but real pine trees. These trees are festooned with their photos and star ornaments from Gifts & Graces, a wonderful organization which promotes livelihood products from remote areas.

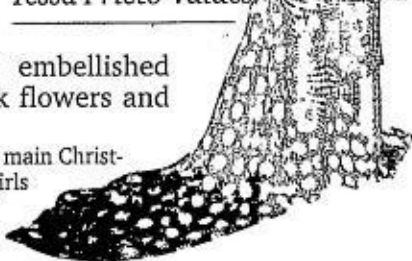
In keeping with my efforts to support charitable projects, all guests were asked to bring old clothes for Typhoon Reming victims. It turned out to be a great way to weed out everyone's closets in time for the New Year, as all brought in overwhelming donations that will surely go a long way to help our fellow Pinoy in need.

There are some Christmas seasons where all the merriment seems to be concentrated in a particular place. This year, The Conservatory at the Manila Peninsula seems to be the epicenter of Christmas partying.

The first tremors came from Robbie and Helen Delgado, founders of Transnational Diversified Group, who moved their annual Christmas party from the Tower Club which the party had outgrown. Every year, this party gets bigger and better and this year was no exception.

As always, the raffle prizes got bigger and better, too, including more airline tickets. The

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes



In keeping with my efforts to support charitable projects, all guests at my Christmas party were asked to bring old clothes for Typhoon Reming victims



BULGARI honcho Mario Katigbak



STYLE icons Mons Tantoco, Tina Ocampo and Beng Dee



KLM key movers Bingo Braganza, Tess Zulueta and Joey Laurente



FAMILY friends Pink Yang, Noji Alindogan, Rica Guillermo, Tessa Alindogan with parents Cory and Nonoy Alindogan



SKY CABLE/Urban Spa hosts Mark and Jhoanna So, Roberta Araneta, Yda Lee, Sea Princess, Arlene Torres of Sky Cable and Irene Ibañez of Urban Spa



SHOE designer Cesar Gaupo and his towering models wearing his clothes and shoes

show was headlined by Robert Seña, although one of TDG's staff, Angel Balatbat of E-Permax, literally stole the show as her duet with Robert highlighted the depth of talent within the multifaceted organization.

KLM's journey

Shock waves came the very next day, as The Conservatory was again the venue, this time for the 55th anniversary celebration of KLM. This premier airline's triumphant journey was catalogued in a short historical video that showed how it used to take a whole day to travel from Europe to Asia.

For this joyous event, locally based international designer Oliver Tolentino (tel. 0917-7899468) created a beautiful, flowing gown for me with bejeweled details, which on closer inspection, turned out to be shaped like an airplane!

Sometimes it pays to attend these events, as Air France KLM gave away 55 World Business-Class tickets to the intimate crowd. As the oldest international airline in the world, KLM has annually increased its market share especially after its merger with Air France.

KLM's history and tradition are not complete without its signature Delft Blue miniature houses. The airline showed off the entire collection, an exhaustive inventory of period styles of Dutch architecture and culture. These historic Dutch houses are given to World Business-Class travelers. Avid collectors included former US President Dwight Eisenhower, who had his very own set displayed on his desk at the White House.

Incredible shoes

Staying with my earthquake metaphor, Conservatory aftershocks continued with design guru Cesar Gaupo's launch of his shoe designs. The main drama was provided by statuesque models wearing the shoes while displayed atop lighted panels. Guests could scrutinize the incredible shoes while mingling around during the "Phantom of the Opera"-inspired show.

Together with Cesar Gaupo, Maldita owners Eric and Emelda Teng have opened Gaupo Shoe Salon at the Basement Level of The Peninsula. The beauty about custom-made shoes is the comfort and support provided by each pair. And with Gaupo's designs, the footwear becomes a perfect fit of form and function.

Gift ideas

Since Christmas is now horrifyingly near, I realize that I'm running out of shopping time, what with so many social events crowding my calendar. Here are some gift ideas I wish I had time for:

1. For that very special loved one, jewelry is always much appreciated. Check out the collections at Raphael's at The Shang. Designer/owner Mia Florendo was one of the finalists at the Guild of Philippine Jewellers Exhibit. She has created outstanding showpieces in precious and semi-precious stones.

2. The Ayala Malls and Greenbelt 4 hosted a Christmas Shopping Cocktail Party with a boys' choir and a free-flowing fashion show to entice guests to see the items up close. Bulgari honcho Mario Katigbak almost convinced my husband Dennis to get me a Bulgari watch, although with a week to go I am still hopeful.

3. Sky Cable and Urban Spa tied up for an



DISCO fever party hosted by the Sea Princess



PHOTOGRAPHER Willy Saw



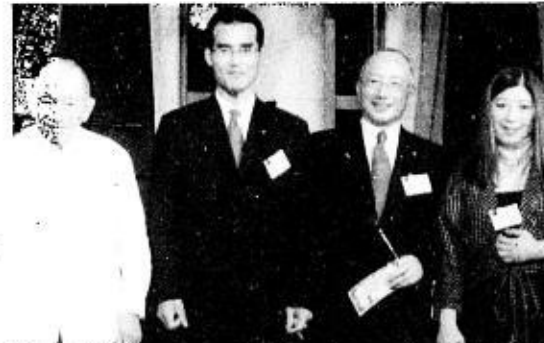
RAPHAEL'S Jewellers' owner Mia Florendo



KLM tall and pretty ladies Joanna Tan and Dindin Monserrat



KLM royal family with Air France KLM regional GM Ihab Sorial (center)



ACCOUNTING wiz Wash SyCip, Asiana GM Ty Kim, TDG CEO Robbie Delgado and lovely wife, Helen



MODELS Bianca Valerio and Ornusa Cadness



TDG GIRLS Cecille So, Grace Borromeo, Kaye Acopio and Donna Perez



DESIGNER friends at LRI Business Plaza Trina Feist, Ito Kish, Ari and Pinky Peralta

early Christmas session to beat the holiday rush. Pampering treatments are wonderful gifts for stressed-out friends. Located at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, the spa has a small retail area for just about anyone on the list. And just a few floors down, visit Felicity of Ricky Toledo and Chito Vandre for the most astounding presents ever.

4. For furniture and furnishings, head to LRI Business Plaza along Reposo Street in Makati. Multi-talented designer Ito Kish has recently opened a quaint shop selling unique gifts. Right next to his shop is Silk Cocoon's sister shop with interesting home furnishings made from signature fabrics of copper, silk and other weaves.

5. For those into photography, stunning nude black-and-white photos by Willy Saw are now on display at the Palawan Center (across Milky Way Building on Pasay Road).

It takes a creative eye to capture these great shots while still promoting the islands of Palawan.

6. For those conscious of their skin but are hesitant to spend a fortune on it, Pond's has developed a new line of skin lotions and treatments all containing sunblock. It recently launched these products with a big event—the invite was a wonderful box of chocolates and tulips. As the saying goes, history does repeat itself, because, by using Pond's, I have now turned into my mother (who also uses Pond's).

In just eight days, we can all take a pause from all the shopping and socializing and focus on the real meaning of Christmas. I can hardly wait!

E-mail the author at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph



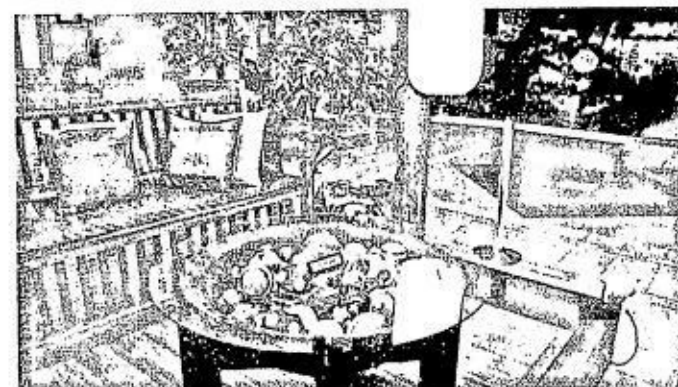
TRENDY table setting by Michelle Simone



GOLDEN metal Christmas tree from True Value at Daphne Oseña's living room setting



MARICRIS Bernardino, division manager for marketing of Alabang Town Center; Carol Mills, general manager of Alabang Town Center; Daphne Oseña; Fortune Ledesma; and Monette Alquin, Alabang Town Center operations manager



A GLIMPSE of Fortune Ledesma's home in Tagaytay can be seen in her living room setting which can be viewed in ATC's Home for the Holidays.

Christmas setting exhibit ongoing

ALABANG TOWN CENTER'S Home Zone offers almost everything you may need and want for your home—from modern sofa sets to antique cabinets, holiday décor to ordinary home accents.

Variety, a feature of Home Zone, is clearly evident in this year's annual Home for the Holidays exhibit that showcases Christmas setting designs by celebrities.

Television host/producer Michelle Simone's yuletide dining setting uses fun colors and eclectic items. It includes a Gramma Phone from Herencia, May Back chairs from Store One and red Imari plates from Herencia.

Honorary consul of Monaco Fortune Aleta-Ledesma has a lanai Christmas setting that uses Herencia's Indonesian cabinet and Japanese lamp, colorful pil-

lows from Home and Beyond, and a table filled with Christmas balls from True Value.

The Christmas living room setting of TV host Daphne Oseña-Paez uses a carpet from Jo-Liza, two long kamagong benches from Home and Beyond, and a modern and feminine Moon Sofa from Store One, among others.

The Home for the Holidays exhibit is now on its third year.

Participating merchants this year include Play and Display, True Value, Dwellings, Automatic Center, Robles Heritage, Jo-Liza, Silahis Arts and Crafts, Store One, Home and Beyond, Herencia Arts and Antiques, Gourdo's, Carpet Showroom and Designer Blooms.

Home for the Holidays at Home Zone is ongoing until Dec. 29 at the ground floor of Alabang Town Center.

Mall tenants to play Santa

KIDS 3-10 YEARS OLD CAN FILL THEIR Christmas bags with goodies if they show up at Festival Supermall as soon as it opens Dec. 23 and make the rounds of mall tenants.

The trip around the mall ends at the

Carousel Court for a Christmas Costume Contest. One sheet of 10 ride tickets from Pixie Forest or X-cite entitles a kid to join the contest. Prizes in cash and kind will be given away.

A magic show will be presented by Lou Hi-

lario to cap the event. The magician will be back at the mall Dec. 30.

Call 8503514. Festival Supermall is at Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Sea lion in X'mas dinner show

OCEAN ADVENTURE offers a three-hour Christmas treat that includes encounters with bottle-nose dolphins, and false killer whales at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. and the sea lion show at 8 p.m.

New features not seen in the daily shows have also been added for the holiday season. Ocean Adventure's aquarium, wildlife rescue center and other exhibit areas will also be open to visitors.

Dinner show will be held Dec. 30.

Tickets cost P500 each for adults and P400 each for children, inclusive of park entrance and dinner. The venue for the sea lion shows can only hold about 200 guests, so hurry, seats are limited. The dinner show is also perfect for family or corporate parties and conventions.

Call (047) 2529000, 6382281-82 or 6334185. The adjacent Camayan Beach Hotel is accepting holiday reservations at (047) 2528000.

Celebrate Life with Cory Quirino & SMI

A health, beauty & wellness day
December 20, 2006

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Win a gift that's much better than a partridge in a pear tree.

On the Sixth day of Christmas,
my Moto gave to me,
6 Hot Pink Motos and a new
MOTOKRZR for free.

Tune in to your favorite radio station. Listen closely to Motorola's Twelve Gifts of Christmas and follow the DJ's instructions after the song is played. If you can sing the song then correctly answer the DJ's question, you'll get to win cool Motorola gifts and a chance to win the new Motorola KRZR and RIZR phones! Better than Six geese a-laying and Five golden rings.

MOTOROLA 12 GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS!



EVERYTHING that makes Christmas—lights, tree, choirs—are at Power Plant.

Make it a favorite this Christmas

ROCKWELL'S POWER PLANT MALL GIVES YOU SEVERAL reasons to make it a favorite destination this season. Today, ballerinas perform at the Plaza Strip. On Dec. 23, balladeer Arthur Manuntag brings back the sound of old-fashioned romance by performing all-time favorites.

Every weekend until Dec. 24 different choirs will perform at the mall.

Rockwell's soaring Christmas tree is made of maple leaves and is fully adorned with bright, amber lights. Poinsettias and Christmas wreaths are scattered all over the mall interior.

At Santa's Wishing Station, children can send Santa their Christmas Wish List and receive his reply!

They can also meet and greet Santa 4-7 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, at Gingerbread House at the South Court of the mall.

Through the mall's Christmas Wish List, shoppers have a chance to bring home holiday treats from such stores as Crabtree & Evelyn, Sapato Manila and Aranaz.

This season, Rockwell's Power Plant Mall tries to offer experiences to be treasured by families.



ROCKWELL Power Plant has lined up various activities for whole families this season.



Manhattan Garden City AT THE ARANETA CENTER

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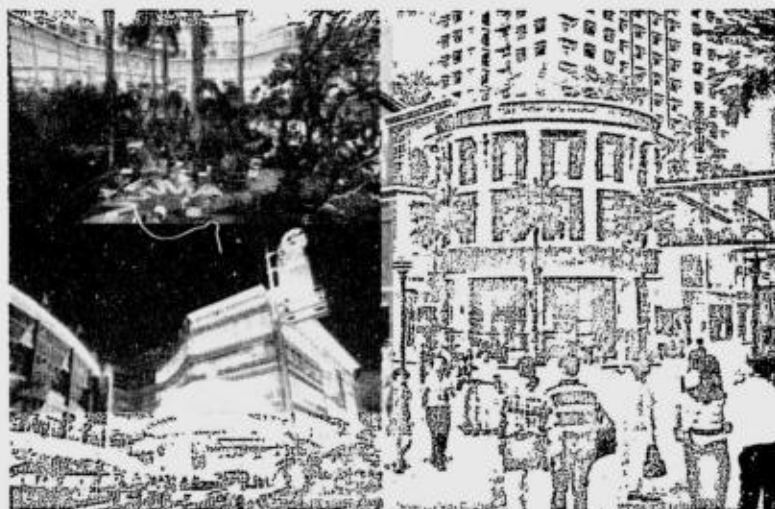
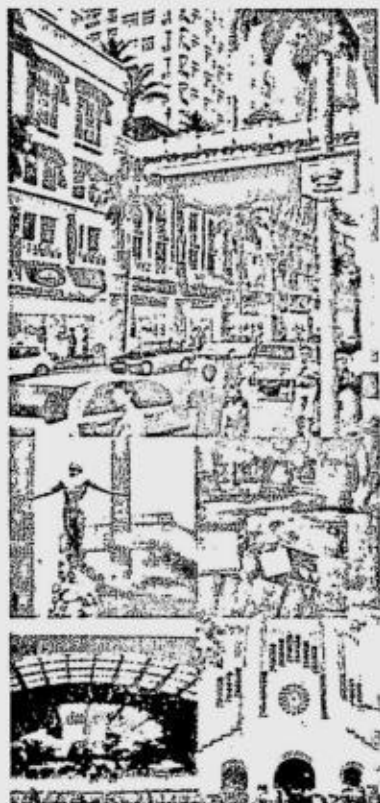
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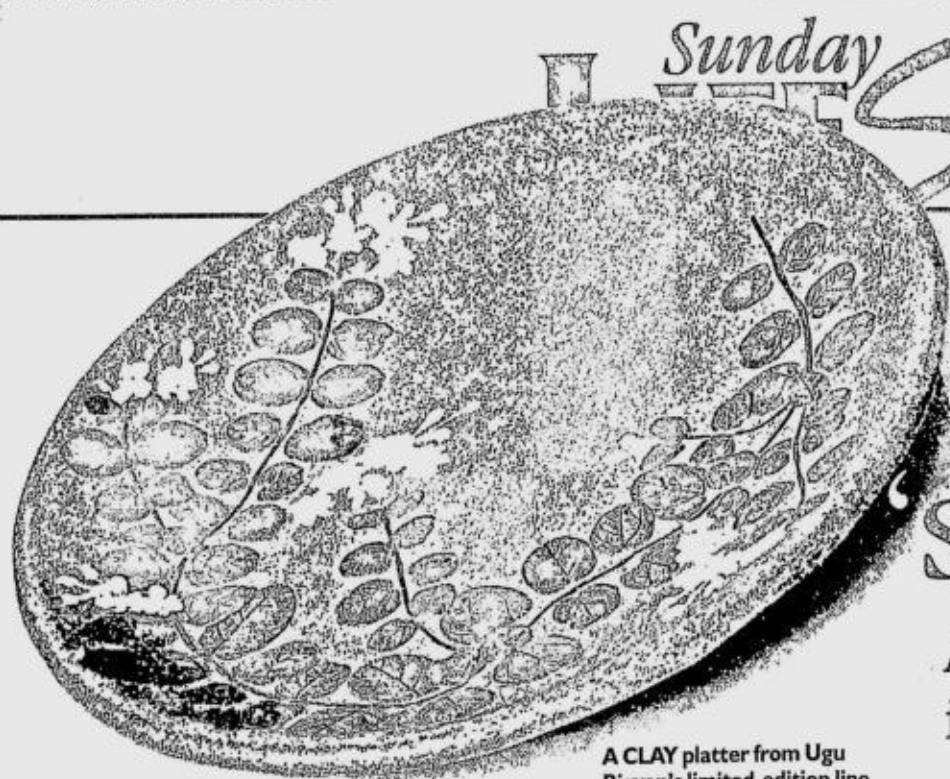
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A CLAY platter from Ugu Bigyan's limited-edition line

Home is the sampaguita'

A modest national symbol is thrust into the spotlight



ALEXANDRA Ramos, Crossings CEO, and stylist Rachy Cuna

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Romy Homillada

JUST AS the Philippines decided not so long ago to make the predatory eagle the national bird instead of the modest *maya*, some Filipino plant enthusiasts propose every now and then that the *sampaguita* be changed as Filipino national flower.

After all, if national symbols are supposed to represent a nation's and a people's character and spirit, the delicate, tiny, low-key *sampaguita*, a member of the jasmine family, seemed to project Filipinos as timid, shy and self-effacing.

There might have been some subliminal attempt at a put-down of a colonial population when an American governor-general declared *sampaguita* as the national flower, just as the colonizers decreed the non-descript *maya* as national bird.

But though it has foreign origins (like most Filipinos), the *sampaguita* probably is a fitting symbol for it also shares the Filipinos' will and ability to survive against odds, among others.

For all its modest look and fragile white star-shaped flowers, the woody vine or shrub actually thrives better when conditions are harsh. Growers say the reason why the flower is so much more abundant and cheaper in the dry months, around graduation time, is because it likes the heat and just a little water.

And though it reportedly arrived in the country only in the 18th century, Filipinos seemed to have immediately taken it as their own that they created legends about its origin that were definitely more romantic than being shipped from the foothills of the Himalayas.

Songs have been written about it and, perhaps most significant of all, it is the favorite offering of Filipino Catholics to their saints, whether in churches or altars at home.

Strung together into a lei, it remains the traditional welcome offering to

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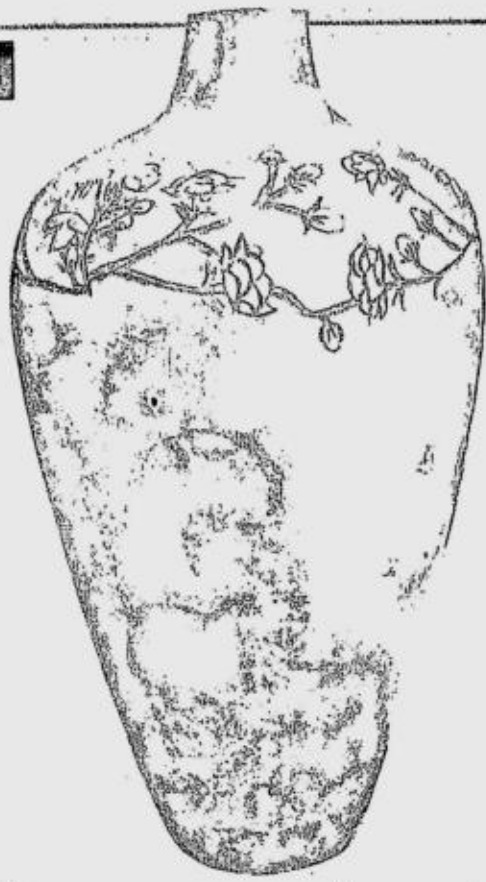


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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5052, Series of 2006

MAKATI ROCKWELL SHANGRI-LA PLAZA GATEWAY SAN ANTONIO KATIPUNAN GREENBELT MAGALLANES CORINTHIAN HILLS



Home is the 'sampaguita'

CROSSINGS' new line of home décor and accessories showcases the sampaguita, a South Asian plant that Filipinos have taken as their own.

From page H1

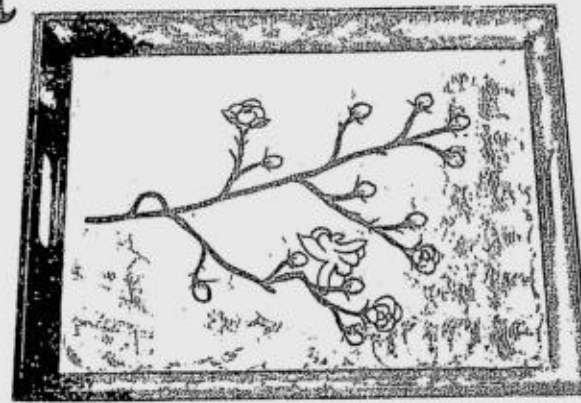
guests. Maybe it was the scent that made Filipinos fall in love with the sampaguita—sweet but not cloying, never overpowering, delicately wafting around enclosed spaces like a room or a vehicle, and freshening the air.

So, despite the influx of more flamboyant blooms, including foreign varieties, the sampaguita remains a sentimental favorite.

Homage

That is why when stylist Rachy Cuna was asked by Crossings Department Store to develop a totally new line of home décor and accessories, it did not take him long to decide to pay homage to the national symbol by using it as the motif for the entire collection.

Getting on board artists like the noted potter Ugu Bigyan, local craftspeople, artisans



FROM note cards to throw pillows, trays and towels, the national flower is getting all the exposure it deserves.

and embroiderers, the line that was unveiled recently at Crossings branch in Shangri-La Plaza initially consists of curtains, towels, note cards, table runners, jars, trays, among others. Still to come are sampaguita-based scents.

In the new Crossings collection, the sampaguita is embossed, etched, embedded, embroidered or sketched on the materials.

Cuna, who worked on the collection for three months orchestrating the work of the various collaborators, said they wanted to present something different. He felt it was appropriate to shine the spotlight on the national flower, which now tended to be overlooked.

"We wanted to highlight something very Filipino," Cuna said. "With the sampaguita collection, we are bringing a part of our cul-

ture into our homes."

He added that, though designs were updated, the products used traditional materials like the katsu and jute, capiz and sinamay. The delicate blooms are "blown up" or rendered life-size, with stem and all.

Bigyan created a special line of his fresh leaves and flowers molds that show almost every feature of the plant-veins and all for pots and jars.

The Sampaguita Collection for Crossings Home is available in Crossings Shangri-La Plaza (6354410) and Quezon Avenue (3732550).

In 2007, Crossings also expects to launch new product lines in fashion and shoes designed by local artists like United Pop by Richie Ortega and Zcarpa by John Kenner shoes.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

"I, I, CAP'N!"

ACROSS	52 Suffix with 18-Across	99 Adriatic resort port	4 ROY G. — 5 Maladroit	46 Pertaining to 47 Cherished	81 Layover
1 Hi — monitor	53 — Domingo	101 Early video game name	6 Lawsuit, e.g.	48 Get — good thing	84 "— Hear a Waltz?"
4 Often-flexed muscles	54 Pretty coin?	102 MLK's title	7 Suffix with disk	50 Rises in profits, e.g.	85 Arab prince
10 Creme — creme	56 Unravel	103 Photos	8 Royal heir	9 Cave in Science Guy?	90 Opposite of horizontal
14 Shower powder	58 Trifle (with)	105 Brian of rock	9 Cave in	51 "Bill —, the	92 Really enjoy oneself, in slang
18 Swiss mount	59 Entry rug	106 Prefix with light	10 Computer information collection	57 Longtime youth org.	93 Alphabet beginner
19 "My Way" singer	61 So-so grades	108 "Holy moly!"	11 Jannings of "Faust"	59 Subcompact taxi	94 Smidgen
20 "So be it"	63 Diary author	110 Lack of moisture	12 First of a string of 13 popes	60 Absorbed a financial loss, in slang	97 Fuzzy green fruit
21 Opera tune	64 University of Chicago research center	114 Pueblo dweller	13 Hall or Oakley	62 Lip —	100 Not flabby
22 G-men's inquiry	68 Give way	122 Prove false	14 NBAer's asset	65 City in SE Kansas	104 "No idea"
25 Sly glance	70 — Cola	123 Grandiose	15 Specialty claim	66 Cluck of disapproval	107 Acquired relative
26 Lone Ranger's chum	71 Mortimer the dummy	124 1991 David Bowie/Rosanna	16 Property claim	67 QB's goals	109 Wildebeest
27 Hammer end	72 — use (futile)	125 1991 David Bowie/Rosanna	17 Joker, e.g.	69 Minute amount	110 Movement to music, in Metz
28 Part of Indonesia	74 Taj —	126 Shave — haircut	19 People sawing wood	72 Judge's cry	111 Funeral tune
30 Cuss out	77 Teachers on slopes	127 "Mona —"	23 Novelist — Calvino	73 More fastidious	112 Moses' peak
32 Musical sign	82 Shelley poem	128 Shave — haircut	24 Mr. Lincoln	74 Coffee-cocoa blend	113 Begin, as bad weather
34 German "a"	83 Yemeni city	129 Attacks like a crocodile	29 Tie fabric	75 Fess up to	114 Succor
35 — Miserables	85 Dollar divs.	130 Moo goo — pan	31 Like Russia, partially	76 — grudge (harbored resentment)	115 Mayberry kid
36 Spin — (do like Spider-Man)	87 Informercials	131 Bell ring	33 JFK follower	77 Pittail	116 Leaning tower city
38 Wee devil	88 "I small —"	132 Techniques	36 Lawyers: Abbr.	78 Londoners' farewells	117 Actress Merrill
41 Jumped	89 Nero's 955	133 Tidbit	37 Court	79 SeaWorld whale	118 — 500 (car race)
45 Figure skater who won silver at Albertville	91 Largest city in Nebraska	134 — and yang	39 Chop finely	80 Train track part	120 Tale twister
49 2002 U.S. Women's Open winner	93 "This is only —"	DOWN	40 Yearn (for)		121 Playful bites
	95 Org. with operatives	1 Inflatable floaters	42 Make amends for		125 Suffix of dogmas
	96 Japanese pitcher formerly with the Yankees	2 Arm part	43 Jeopardy		126 Low — (diet)
		3 Backbone	44 Latest thing		
			45 Tick off		

answer on page F3

Shop 'til you drop. Learn. Be entertained. Bring home prizes. These could only happen at one great venue!

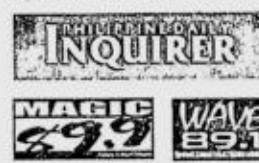
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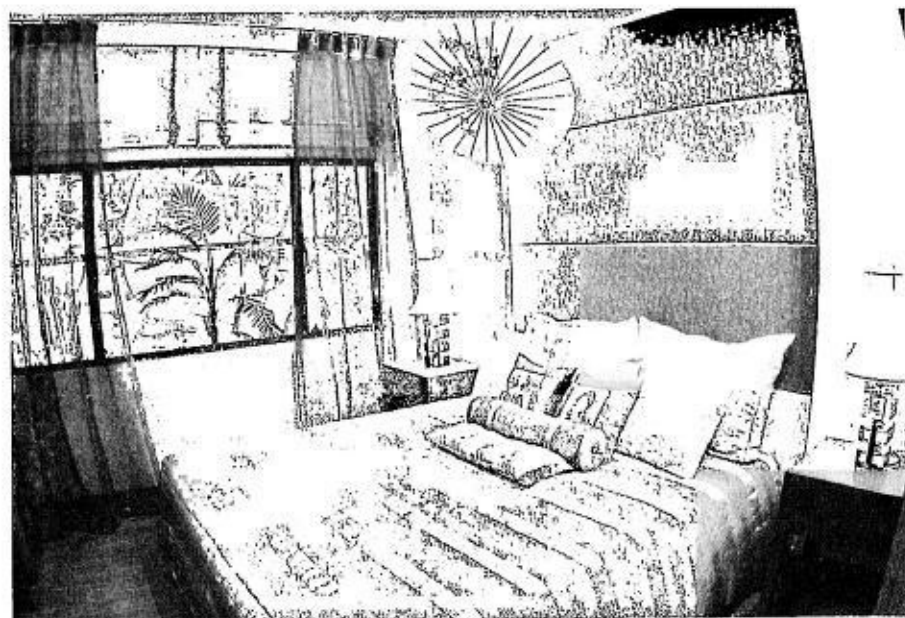
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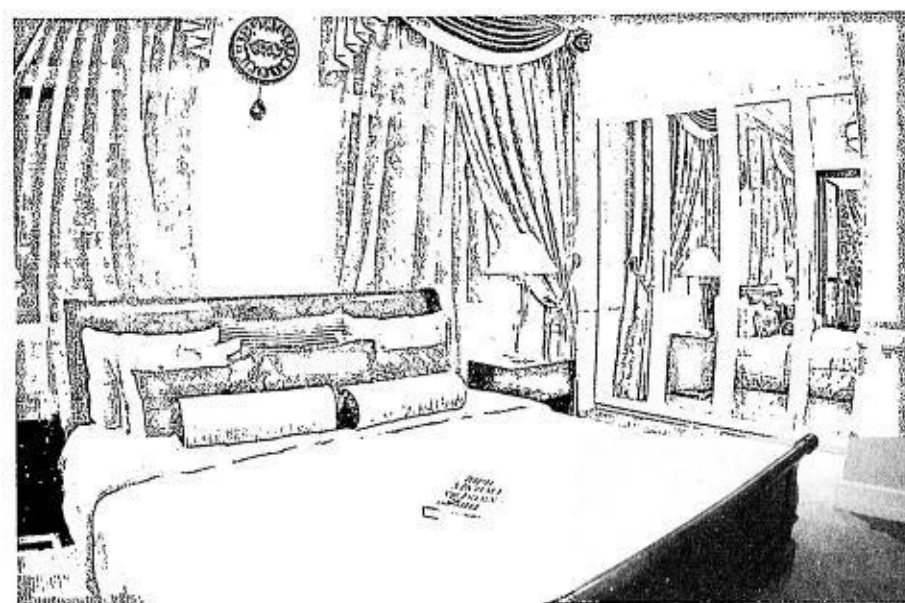


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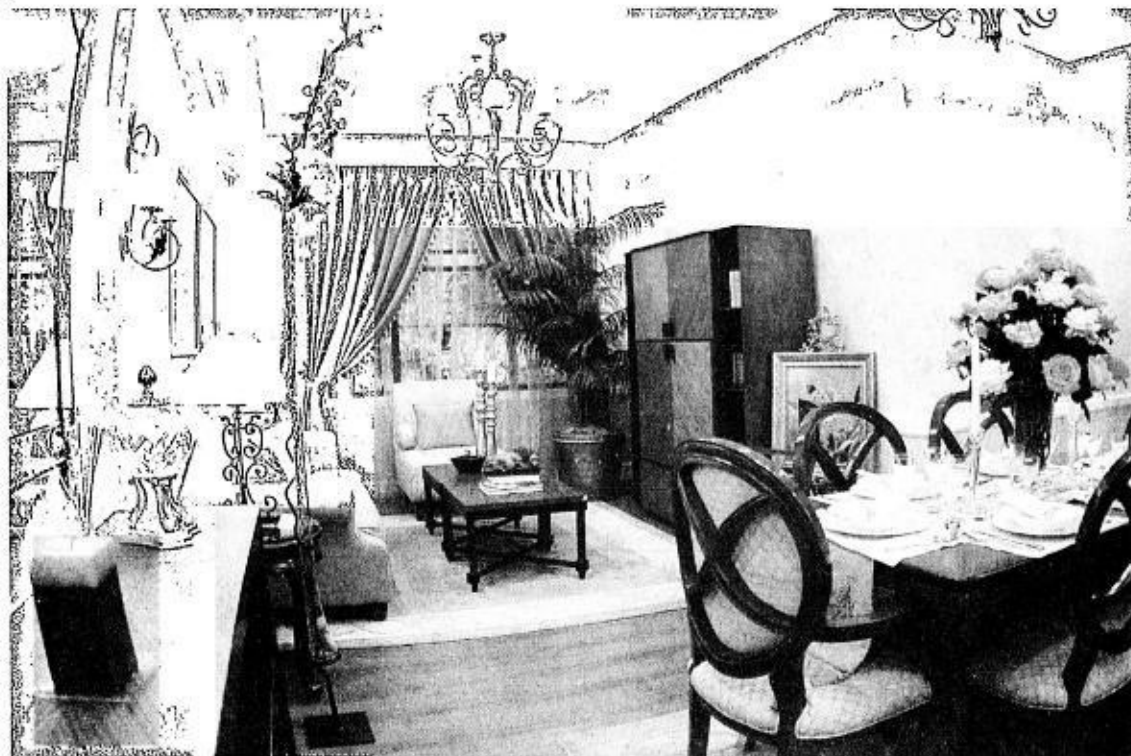
THE ONE-BEDROOM unit was designed according to a Modern Chinese motif.



THE COUPLE will feel pampered à la royalty in their master's suite.



TERRA-COTTA soldiers stand guard as wonderful accent pieces in the Modern Asian-themed one-bedroom model unit.



THE LIVING and dining area of the two-bedroom model unit basks in contemporary European elegance.

I'll take Manhattan

MANHATTAN Garden City, the newest venture of Megaworld Corporation in cooperation with the Araneta Group, launched recently its showroom in Gateway Mall Araneta Center.

As the first transit-oriented community, the MGC is accessible. From there, one could get a ride to Monumento or to Taft Avenue, to Marikina or to Recto Manila.

A 729-meter garden walkway connects MGC towers to the MRT-3 and LRT-2 Cubao Stations.

Since Manhattan Garden City is within the Araneta Center, the country's first leisure and lifestyle haven, chic boutique and specialty stores will be completely accessible to residents of the towers.

The residence is very near the top basketball draws and lively entertainment at the Araneta Coliseum.

Merienda and dinner are available at The Oasis, the glitzy Gateway Mall's floating interior garden.

Rustan's, Shopwise and the Araneta Center's choice malls are just a short walk away.

The Manhattan Garden City offers a range of activities at the fourth-floor podium area. The 729-meter garden walkway promotes social interaction among neighbors.

Top developer Megaworld Corporation grouped the offerings into four categories for the pure enjoyment of residents.

The active set will love fitness-enhancing activities like exercising, biking and jogging along the trails.

Semi-active zones abound for fun and recreation, such as the kiddie playground, teen adventure area and barbecue pits for adults.

Those in their middle ages will love chatting and exchanging pleasantries at the gazebo and sitting areas.

Meanwhile, flower gardening and barefoot walks along the reflexology path are grouped under the passive category.

"We recognize that people need a variety of activities to make their quality time more productive and fulfilling," said Megaworld Central Properties Inc. president Anthony Charlemagne Yu. "And this is precisely the reason why we created various groups of amenities that veer away

from the standard pool, basketball court and gym. The various experiences that Manhattan Garden City residents will encounter at our five-hectare podium area will make them feel that their time spent in the amenity areas is worthwhile."

The Manhattan Garden City showroom at the Gateway Mall features model units.

The studio unit was designed with a young professional in mind. It features a working desk right beside the entertainment area.

The balcony of a bigger studio unit provides the resident his own space for tranquility.

The one-bedroom unit was designed in a Modern Chinese motif and its reddish hue makes it ideal for female executives.

The two-bedroom affair makes families experience contemporary European elegance.

Terra-cotta soldiers stand guard as wonderful accent pieces in the Modern Asian-themed one-bedroom model unit.

Visit the showroom at the third level of Gateway Mall. Also call 8103333 or email inquire@themanhattangardencity.com.

New antique shop at the mall

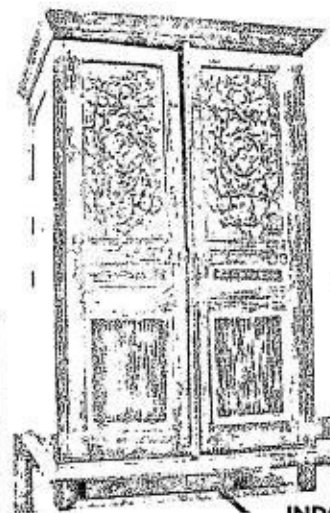
JOANN DE ASIS-SALGADO, DAUGHTER of Tita Viring de Asis, founder of Jo-Liza Arts & Antiques, knew in her heart even as a young girl that she would inherit her mom's passion for the arts.

Salgado would silently observe how her mom ran her shop, how she managed her people, and how she meticulously treated her acquisitions. That's how she honed her own eye for truly precious antique pieces.

Salgado and husband Toto are opening the latest branch Jo-Liza Arts & Antiques at SM



ANTIQUE circumcision chair from Indonesia



INDONESIAN armoire



MOSAIC and beaded hanging lamps

Megamall B. Prized pieces from India, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal and even far-flung Tibet are offered by the store, along with sought-after local wooden pieces.

Salgado says Filipinos have developed a very good sense of mixing and matching. "There's fusion in food and in fashion, and people like to mix and match their clothes and accessories. I guess it's the same with art and antique acquisitions and decorating one's home."

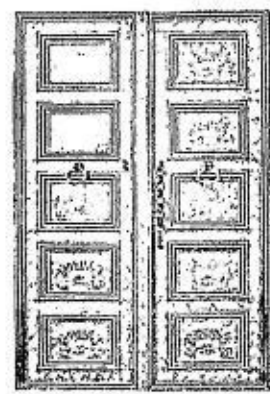
Most of those who come to Jo-Liza stores in San Juan and Alabang are ladies and homemakers. But the owners are constantly surprised on how easy it is to sell to the male clients.

Jo-Liza has a growing clientele of foreigners—the expat crowd, ADB wives and foreign service group. "They like our items, specially Philippine wood, and ship these to their respective countries when their work contracts here expire," says Salgado.

Visit Jo-Liza Arts and Antiques at the 4/F of SM Megamall Building B.



ANTIQUE carroza wood-carved angel head with glass eye detail



HAND-PAINTED enamel green window from India





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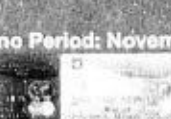


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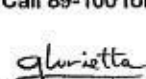
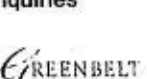
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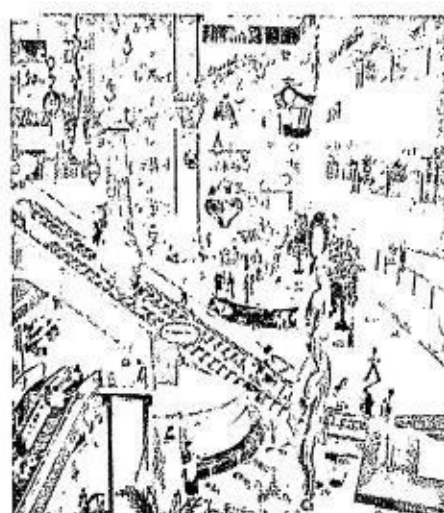
We'll take you farther.



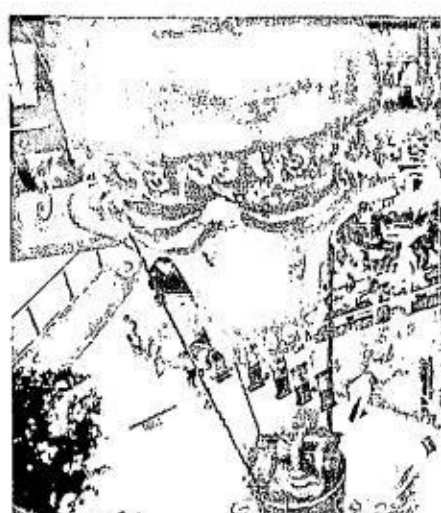
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Magical holiday at Christmas village

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA treats Christmas shoppers to a festive holiday display of a magical Christmas Village.

With a snow-covered village for backdrop, it features a fireplace, jolly St. Nick on his sleigh, flying houses, hot-air balloons, and oversized tree trimmings and Christmas ornaments.

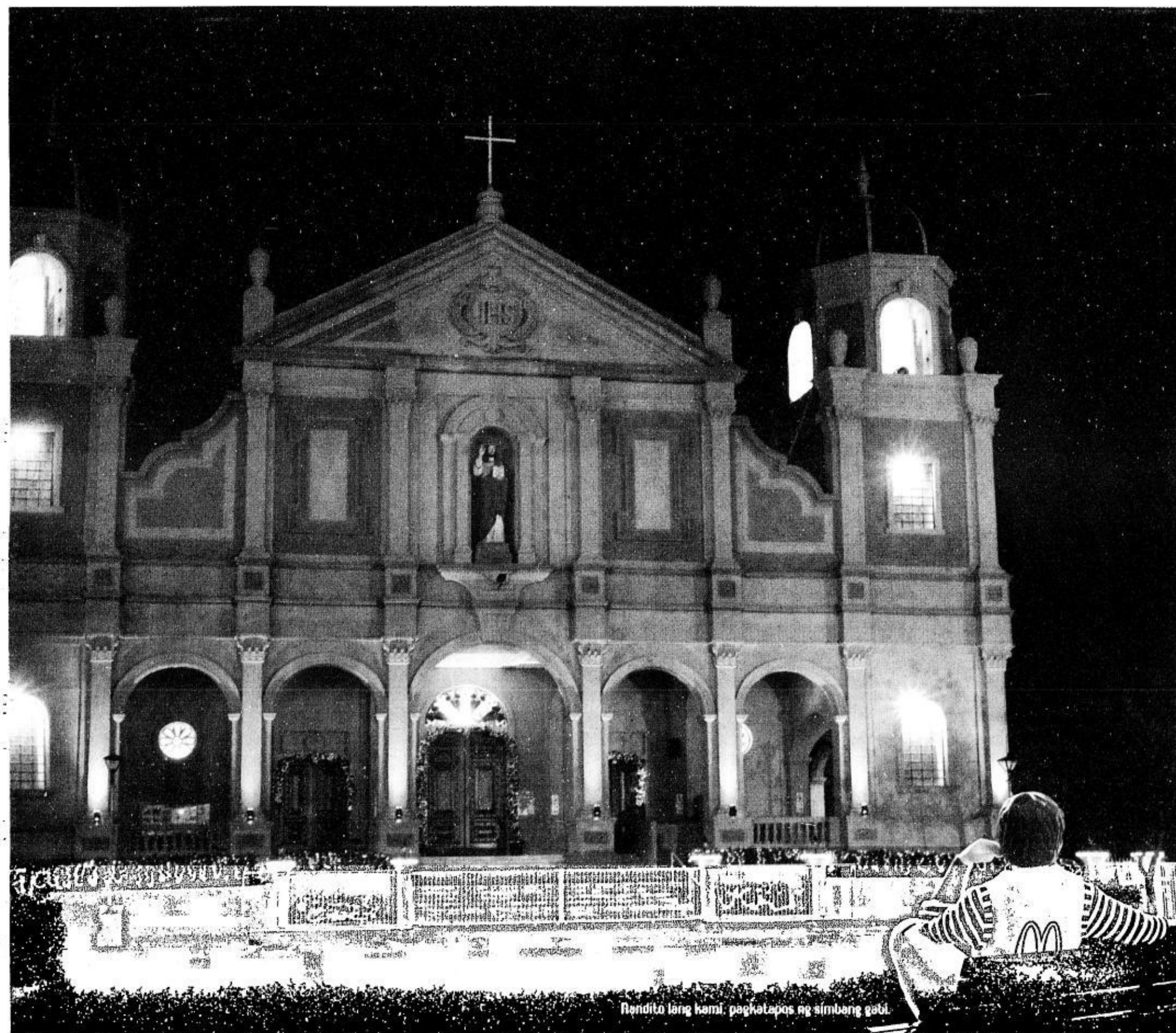
The display was designed by Henry Pascual who aimed for a posh and fresh landscape to suit the mall's interiors.

Adding a level of energy and movement were details like Santa's reindeer in flight, with legs set in various directions and the positions of mannequins as villagers.

The Shangri-La Plaza Christmas Village lets shoppers indulge in a little fantasy and wishful thinking as they savor the vibrant spirit of the season.



MANDALUYONG Mayor Neptali Gonzales and Shangri-La Plaza general manager Lala Fojas, with Shang executives Mary Ann Dizon (left) and Jolyon Tiglao (right) at the ceremonial lighting of the giant Christmas tree



Rendito lang kami, pagkatapos ng simbang gabi.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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AIAI DE LAS ALAS



VERNI VARGA

INSIDE

■ 'Idol' post-mortem by
Ryan Cayabyab I/4

■ Recalling FPJ's last
night with friends J/3

■ Catching up with
Fantasia Barrino K/4

A delightful CHRISTMAS extravaganza

By Pocholo Concepcion, Contributor
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

GR EAT MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS took the strain out of watching an overwhelming lineup of TV, theater and music stars at the 2006 ABS-CBN Christmas Special, "Tuloy na Tuloy pa rin ang Pasko," held Dec. 13 at the Meralco Theater.

The creative inputs of Gerard Salonga, Ric Mercado, Bond Samson and Rey Cristobal, among others, were a source of delight that guided musical director Mel Villena and the house band through 14 exhausting production numbers.

For instance, the burden of presenting more than 50 talents from the Star Magic stable seemed like a breeze with a medley that combined such disparate genres as '70s Swedish pop (Abba's "Dancing Queen," "Mama Mia") and '50s rock (Elvis Presley's "Teddy Bear," "Hound Dog"). For a moment, it didn't matter that Geoff Eigenmann was struggling a bit to keep in synch with the choreography.

Villena himself demonstrated brilliance in the "Big Band Suite" segment, in which the likes of Iya Villana and Rica Peralejo dazzled with jazz versions of Sandwich's "Sugod" and Kamikazee's "Narda," respectively.

Samson's take on Broadway tunes gathered

A DELIGHTFUL/12



SARSI Emmanuel and Maria Isabel Lopez

British firm buys 'Silip'

Remastered '80s film to be
released on DVD in US

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"SILIP" A 1986 FILM DIRECTED BY ELWOOD PEREZ, was bought by the British firm Boom Productions, to be released under the Mondo Macabro DVD imprint abroad.

The news was confirmed by Pete Tombs of Boom/Mondo Macabro, Perez and producer Wilson Tieng of Viking Films International.

"Silip" was top-billed by Sarsi Emmanuel and Maria Isabel Lopez and written by Ricky Lee.

Tieng and Perez told Inquirer Entertainment in separate interviews that "Silip" had its premiere at the 21st Chicago International Film Festival before it started its local run on the eve of the February 1986 Edsa Revolution.

"I sold 'Silip' to different countries in the mid-1980s," Tieng related.

Over a decade later, British film critic Tombs said his interest in the Filipino film was sparked. "I first came across it about 10 years ago, through a review written by [fellow UK] critic Tony Rayns in Sight and Sound [magazine]," Tombs recalled.

He said he had become "fascinated" with the idea that, even during the Marcos era, Filipino filmmakers succeeded in making films that

BRITISH/12



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- Raffle tickets will be valid until the end of the promotion period.
- Raffle tickets will be valid until the end of the promotion period.

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- Dec 24: 9am to 9pm
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- A participant can only win once. Should a participant win more than one prize, he/she will get the highest prize.
- Draw will be held on January 20, 2007 at 10:00 AM.
- Winners will be notified through a letterhead and an e-mail in leading daily newspapers. Prizes can be claimed at the Marketing Department, Duty Free Philippines Inc. (Duty Free Philippines Inc. is a subsidiary of the Philippine Airlines Corporation).
- Winners will be given 60 days to claim their prize. Prizes will be forfeited if not claimed within 60 days.
- Employees of Duty Free Philippines, Globe Telecom, and its subsidiaries and affiliates are not eligible to participate in this promotion.
- Official Period: December 2006 to January 2007.

For more info, visit www.dutyfree.com.ph or call 1-800-888-8888

For the Christmas season (November 15 to January 15), Republic Act No. 9174 extends the shopping period for Balikbayans and OFWs to 30 days upon arrival.

A delightful Christmas extravaganza

From page 11

12 theater stalwarts, with Robert Seña's lung-busting vocals shooting through the venue's roof.

Meanwhile, a number called "Happy Feet" brought the house down as Vhong Navarro and John Pratts led a company of talents, joined by Philippine Ballet Theater, the Streetboys and other dance groups in shaking the stage with loops from "Boogie Wonderland" and other turntable tricks by DJ Kimosave.

Probably the highest point came when Gary Valenciano and Bamboo were pitted in a number that had a classic Gospel hymn segueing into a classic rock tune, both incidentally titled "Hallelujah." It was pure joy seeing Valenciano



AGA Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales



ABS-CBN execs Gabby Lopez, Charo Santos-Concio and March Ventosa



PIOLO PASCUAL

A DELIGHTFUL 13

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 TENACIOUS D MTRCB R-13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	3 HAPPY FEET MTRCB GP 12:05, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
2 THE NATIVITY MTRCB GP 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	4 CASINO ROYALE MTRCB PG-13 1:25, 7:00 A GOOD YEAR MTRCB PG-13 4:30, 10:00

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CASINO ROYALE 1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:40 PG 13
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DIRECTOR Elwood Perez in New York in the 1970s

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1 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 11:50, 2:10, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00 PG-13	2 A GOOD YEAR 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00 PG-13	3 DOLBY DIGITAL
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PROMENADE

3 DECK THE HALLS 11:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:35 GP	4 TENACIOUS D 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20, 10:35 PG-13	5 HAPPY FEET 11:00, 1:15, 3:35, 5:50, 8:15, 10:35 GP
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TENACIOUS D IN: THE PICK OF DESTINY 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20	SPIRIT TRAP R13 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15	THE NATIVITY STORY PG13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

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British firm buys ...

Twenty years later, this passionate film still has an audience, says UK critic

From page 11

"pushed boundaries."

"It was a belated new wave," Tombs told the INQUIRER in an e-mail interview.

By sheer happenstance, he stumbled on an old VHS cassette of a Filipino film titled "Deflorazione" or "Flowers of Virginity" in a bargain bin in Rome, Italy.

"I recognized the cast as being that of 'Silip.' It was dubbed in Italian and was severely cut (25 minutes was missing). But I got the distinct impression as I watched that it was an unheralded minor classic."

With dispatch, he embarked on a hunting expedition. "I asked everyone about it, but no one had seen the film or even heard of it."

A year after finding the VHS tape in Rome, Tombs chanced upon a director's cut of the film on video (dubbed in English and subtitled in Greek) on eBay where it was bought by a friend for \$150.

"I was simply amazed and soon after I contacted [Tieng, who's now with] Solar Films and began the process of licensing the title from [him] for a new DVD release in the United States," he recounted.

Tombs wrote the book "Mondo Macabro" which, according to his e-mail, was "later commissioned as a TV series by Channel 4 in the UK."

"As part of the research for the TV program, I visited the Philippines and interviewed [filmmakers] Eddie Romero, Peque Gallaga, Lore Reyes, Don Escudero and [actress] Marilyn Reyes," he pointed out.

Movie classics

He had previously seen "acknowledged classics" like Lino Brocka's "Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag" and Ishmael Bernal's "City by Night." "At the other end of the spectrum, I've also seen more outrageous examples of popular cinema, including the 'Dama' series, 'Zuma' and [pint-sized spy] Weng-Weng movies."

Needless to say, he is quite acquainted with Philippine cinema.

In his e-mail, Tombs described "Silip" as "beautiful ... visually."

"[It] deals with primal issues: desire and repression; love and death; freedom and conformity; the dreams of youth versus the compromises of old age. These are subjects that have been dealt with before in cinema (in the Philippines, in 'Karnal'), but here the conflicts are raw and the violence that results ... savage and unfettered," he explained.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Perez called his work, a "film on religious misdirection."

Tombs insisted that, 20 years later, there is "still an audience for 'Silip.' There are always people who are looking for something new and different. There are plenty of films with much worse violence in them. [But] what 'Silip' has is passion and commitment ... It's an original."

Tombs reported that the plan is to "release the film on DVD sometime in 2007."

He is currently working on "remastering the film from the original negative to get the best possible version. We want to restore the original widescreen framing and correct the color timing. It's important that the film looks good."

He relayed that his company is also planning to release "another uncompromising film [of the same period], Celso Ad. Castillo's 'Snake Sisters,' later in 2007."

"If these releases go as planned, we certainly hope to license other Filipino films, including some more recent productions," he affirmed.

MYRCB R-13 GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

SHOWN AT THE VATICAN AND WAS APPLAUDED SIX TIMES DURING THE SCREENING.

"I'm not an emotional person, but when I finished watching it ... **THE TEARS CAME DOWN MY CHEEK. I COULDN'T SPEAK.**"
—Anne Graham Lotz
—NEWSWEEK Magazine

"A DIVINE LOVE STORY comparable to those tearjerkers penned by **NICOLAS SPARKS** and **ERICH SEGAL.**"
—Nancy Rose
—VANITY FAIR Magazine

THE NATIVITY STORY
2ND WEEK

"RUSH HOUR" MEETS "THE PACIFIER"

JACKIE CHAN
ROB-B-HOOD

He walked into a robbery and ran off with a 30-million dollar baby.

OPENS JAN. 06

Did You Know...

ENTERTAINMENT highlights during the week of Dec. 17-23:

1933: Five-year-old Shirley Temple signed a movie contract with Fox. Her age was later changed to make her appear a year younger.

1958: George Harrison, Paul McCartney and John Lennon performed as The Quarrymen at the wedding reception of Harrison's brother, Harry.

1970: Elvis Presley paid a visit to President Richard Nixon at the White House.

1973: Singer Bobby Darin died during open heart surgery. He was 37.

A delightful . . . From page I2

working up the audience and egging on Bamboo, as the latter punctuated fist-pumping lyrics with patented hip hop and boxing jigs.

Male heartthrobs John Lloyd Cruz, Zanjou Marudo, Sam Milby, Rafael Rosell and Victor Basa couldn't really sing properly, but were nonetheless applauded for every dashing look they gave to the fans.

Boy Abunda went onstage to introduce a number, and it was totally refreshing to see him in a conservative black suit that deviated from his normally outrageous attire.

None could be more outrageous that night, at least in appearance, than Ai Ai de las Alas. Outlandish was the comedienne's hairdo that was fashioned either after Baguio's zigzag road or the Ifugao Rice Terraces, topped with a bahay-kubo at the crown. "Akala niyo walang koneksyon to ha," she ranted.

"Well, di ba sa Baguio maraming pine trees na pwedeng gawing Christmas tree?"

Uproarious on the other hand was the reaction to Willy Revillame's antics, which didn't spare ABS-CBN bosses Gabby Lopez, Charo Santos-Concio and Cory Vidanes, among others, from taking part in the "Boom Tarat" routine. Quite embarrassed was one network executive, Enrico Santos, whose refusal to participate nearly caused Revillame to tumble down the orchestra pit.

At show's end, the two were seen lashing at each other as Lopez tried to calm them down. (See related item in Rushes, page J/4.)

Oh well, maybe that's just typical of kapamilyas' love-hate relationships.

The ABS-CBN Christmas Special airs tonight at 9:45.

MANO PO 5
GUA A DI TI LOVE YOU
A FILM BY JOEL C. LAMANGAN, DGPI

MS. JACLYN KEEHCE MICHELLE ETHEL WILLY TONY JIM POLO JOYCE ILLA SAM

AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2006 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL PHILIPPINES
OPENS DECEMBER 25, 2006
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and REGAL MULTIMEDIA, INC. TEXT MANO5 ON TO 4627

DEC. 21 SM NORTH EDSA CINEMA 7
Catch the Mano Po 5 Special Presentation this Sunday, December 17 on SOP!

ZSAZSA ZATURNAH
ZE MOVEEH
Carlo Vergara's
JOEL C. LAMANGAN, DGPI

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www.regalmultimedia.net/zaturannah

Premiere night on DEC. 20 at SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10

SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 8
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OPENS DECEMBER 25, 2006
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www.regalmultimedia.net/shakerattleandroll8

Premiere night on DEC. 19 at SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
Catch the Shake Rattle & Roll 8 Special Presentation this Sunday, December 17 on SOP and ASAP!

SUPER NOYPI
AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2006 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL PHILIPPINES
OPENS DECEMBER 25, 2006
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www.supernoypi.com

Premiere night on DEC. 22 at SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
Catch the Super Noypi Special Presentation this Sunday, December 17 on SOP and ASAP!

The fantastic 'Idol' journey

Ryan Cayabyab writes about being a judge on the just-concluded reality TV talent search

MAG-INGAT...MAKIRAMDAM...MATAKOT BABALIK SA'YO ANG KARMA

RICA PERALEJO ANGELICA PANGANIBAN

AND GRETCHEN BARRETTO

TANYA GARCIA BIANCA KING AND ANA CAPRI



MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

WRITTEN BY JOSE JAVIER REYES

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006

IN THEATRES DECEMBER 25, 2006

CATCH THE STARS OF "MATAKOT KA SA KARMA" MALL SHOW TODAY, DECEMBER 17 - GLORIETTA 4 PARKING LOT 6 PM

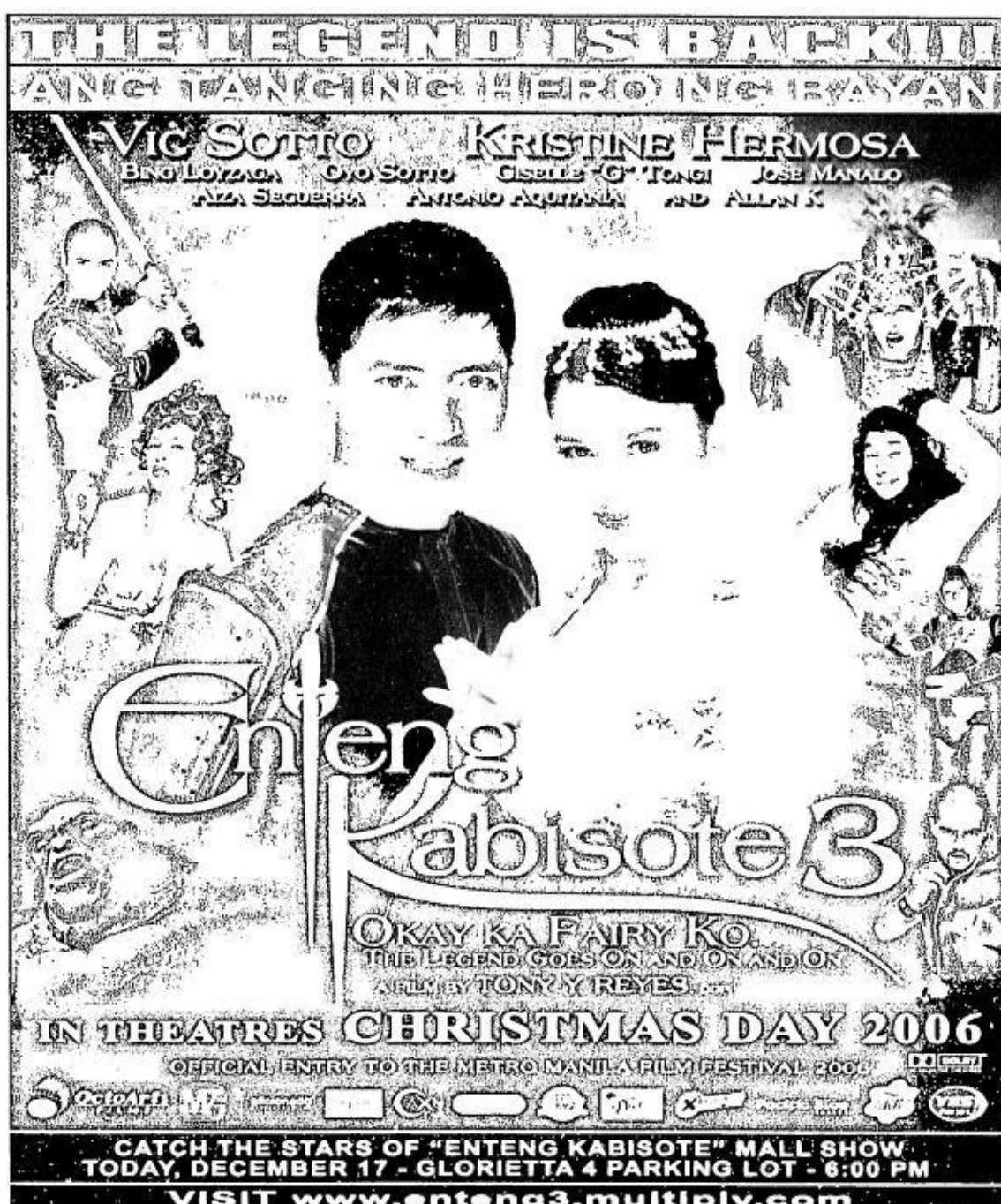
GET A SNEAK PEEK ON THE YEAR'S MOST AWAITED HORROR FILM. WATCH "THE STORIES BEHIND MATAKOT KA SA KARMA" TODAY, DEC. 17, 2:30 PM RIGHT AFTER 80P ON GMA-7

DISCOVERING AND TRAINING NEW artists and music composers are closest to my heart—having taught composition and music theory at the UP College of Music for almost two decades; running my music school for 20 years with my wife Emmy where we discovered and trained a lot of young singers and performers; and being a judge on the amateur singing contest "Ang Bagong Kampeon" in the early 1980s.

So it was not a surprise that I got hooked

THE FANTASTIC/15

THE AUTHOR, left, with fellow judges Pilita Corrales and FrancisM

THE LEGEND IS BACK KIII

ANG TANGINIC-HIERONIMO-BAYAN

VIC SOTTO KRISTINE HERMOSA

BING LOYAGA OYO SOTTO GISELLE "G" TANGI JOSE MAYALO

ALZA SEQUERA ANTONIO AQUINANA AND ALLAN K

Enteng Kabisote 3

OKAY KA FAIRY KO

THE LEGEND GOES ON AND ON AND ON

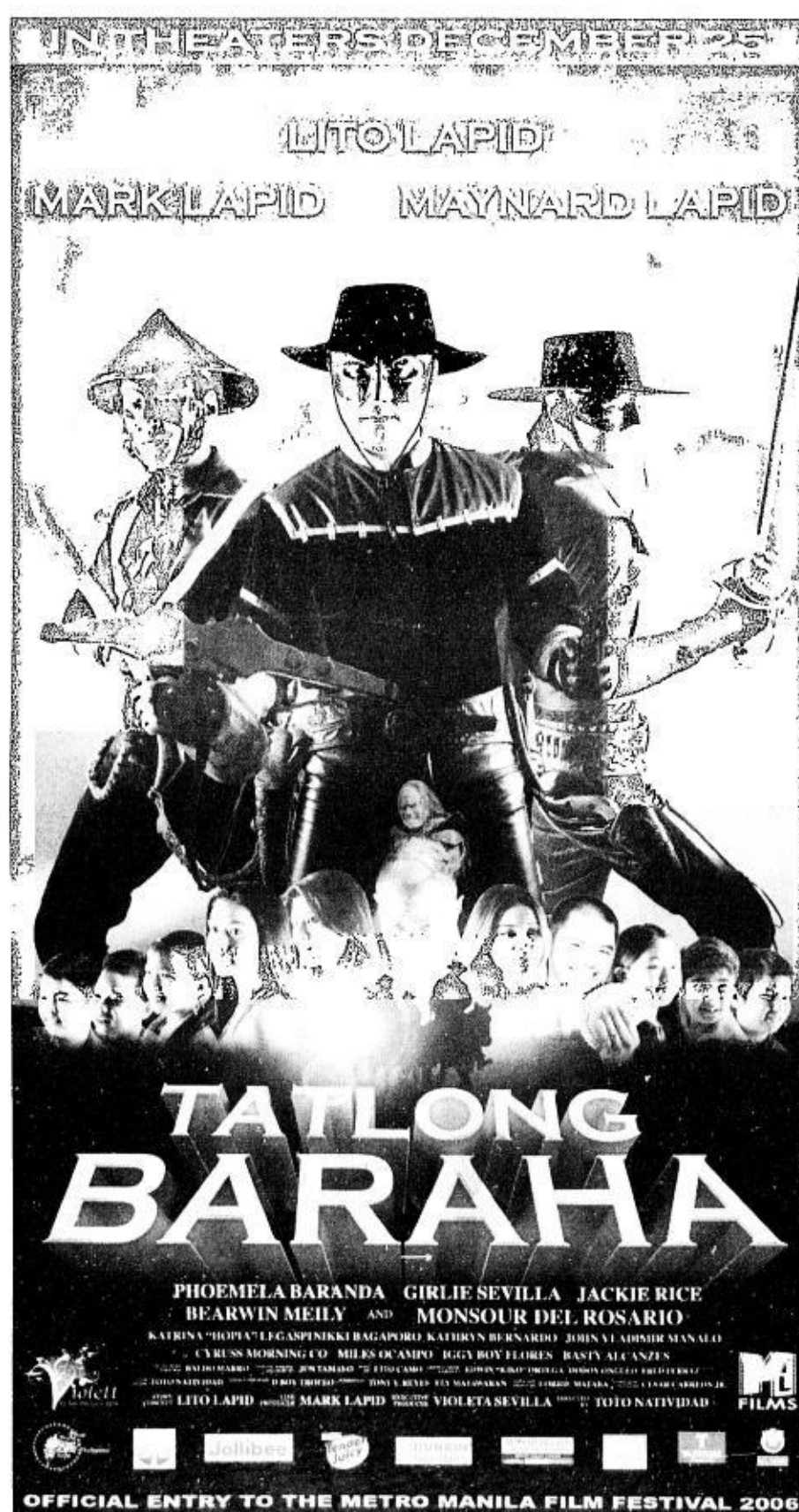
WRITTEN BY TONY Y REYES

IN THEATRES CHRISTMAS DAY 2006

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006

CATCH THE STARS OF "ENTENG KABISOTE" MALL SHOW TODAY, DECEMBER 17 - GLORIETTA 4 PARKING LOT - 6:00 PM

VISIT www.enteng3.multiply.com



LITO LAPID

MARK LAPID MAYNARD LAPID

TATLONG BARAHA

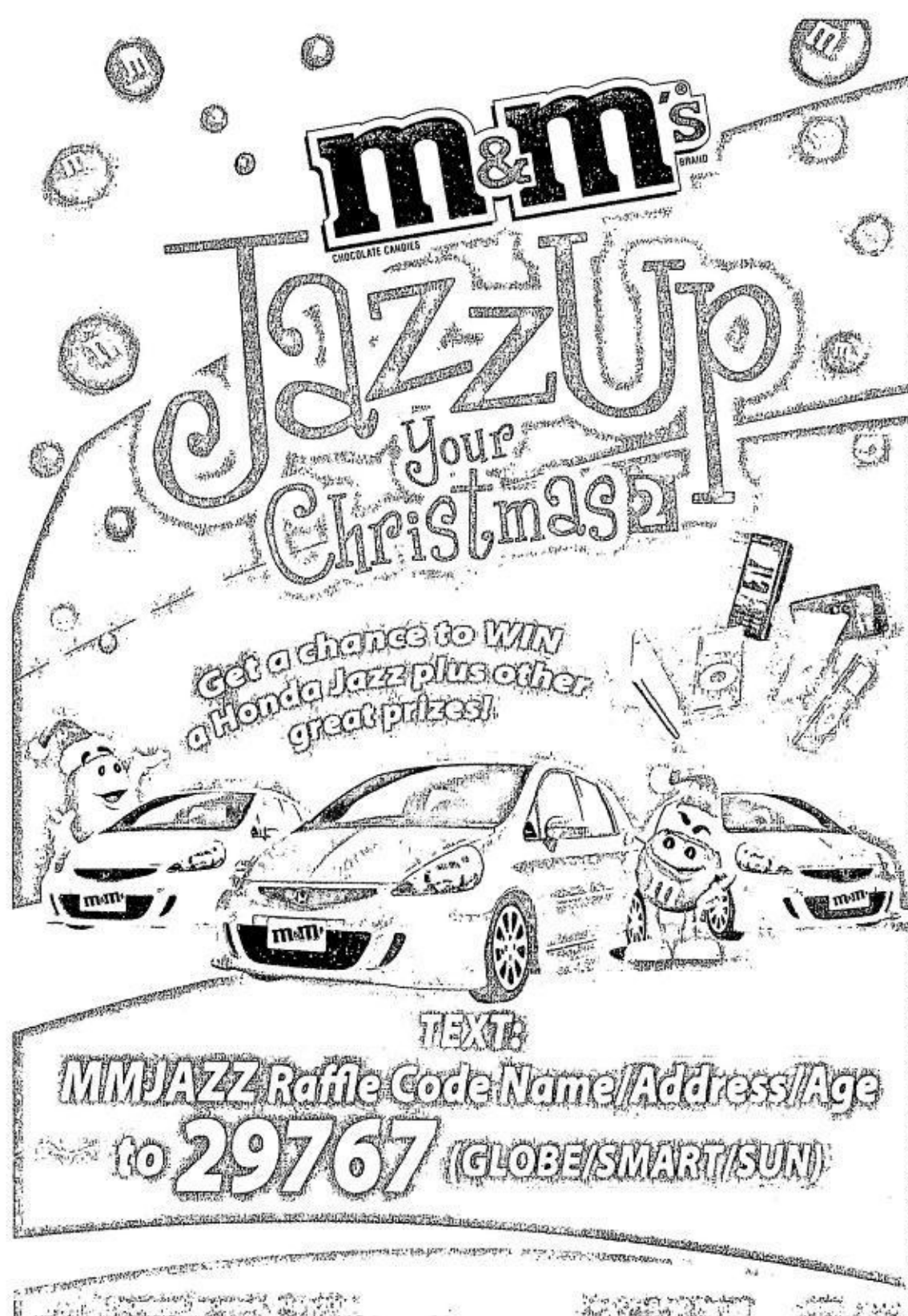
PHOEMELA BARANDA GIRLIE SEVILLA JACKIE RICE

BEARWIN MEILY AND MONSOUR DEL ROSARIO

KATRINA "HOPIA" LEGASPI NIKKI BAGAPORO KATHRYN BERNARDO JONAS V. AMORIM MANALO

CYRUS MORNING CO. MILES O'CAMPO REGY BOY FLORES BASIL ALCAZES

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006



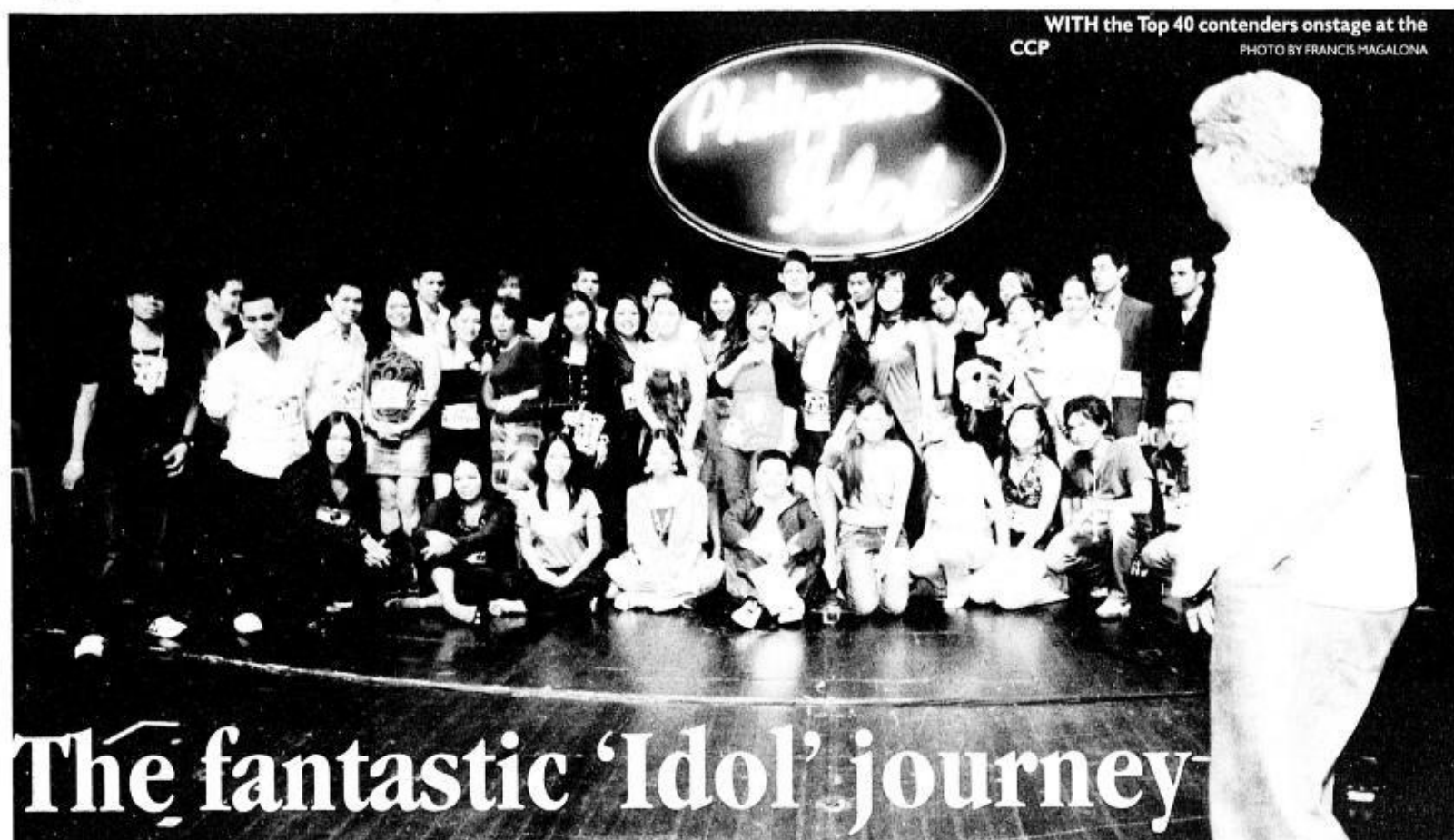
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WITH the Top 40 contenders onstage at the CCP
PHOTO BY FRANCIS MAGALONA

The fantastic 'Idol' journey

From page 14

immediately on "American Idol" when my family visited the US in 2003 (the Ruben Studdard edition). I had not experienced anything like it: Our hosts and their satellite family convened at 8 p.m., dropped everything and watched the "Idol."

During commercials, there was a pokey but fun-filled debate regarding the performance of this and that singer. The show went on for about an hour and the animated discussion was hushed only when the familiar music extro to gap heralded the next portion.

The next year, the Fantasia Barrino edition, and the following year's Carrie Underwood edition were shown in the Philippines. A lot of Filipinos got hooked. I remember how my colleagues were polarized between the rocker Bo Bice and the pretty Carrie.

The following year was the Taylor Hicks edition. He wasn't the best vocalist among the lot, but I was a fan from the start.

It was during the airing of this latest edition that Bobby Barreiro, ABC 5 managing director, scheduled a consultation meeting with me regarding possible names for judges, music director and vocal coach for the local edition which the network acquired from Fremantle Media, UK, the company responsible for "Idol's" worldwide franchise.

During the meeting I asked him casually why he wasn't considering me as a judge. "I didn't think you would be interested," he remarked. Of course I was—how could I not be, being a huge fan of "AI"? All I needed was a go signal from the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts (of which I'm executive and artistic director). Bobby informed Fremantle that I was joining and that they need not audition me.

Mock staging

The start of the journey as judge was a mock staging of a typical "Idol" audition. Asia's Queen of Song Pilita Corrales, master rapper Francis Magalona and I were made to "audition" about 15 singers, with the cameras recording the proceedings.

Perci Intalan, ABC 5 head of Creative and Entertainment Production, guided us through the process and gave us pointers and

possible words to use when we were at a loss, possible ideas, and more acceptable ways to dismiss a non-talent. It wasn't so difficult to get into the shoes of an "Idol" judge since the template was clear and simple.

Of course, we could say anything we want but there was a very important caveat: to tell the truth, and be conscious about our role as "guides" to the aspiring performer, not merely as "judge."

This mantra to "tell the truth" kept spewing out of the mouths of Perci and Sheldon Bailey, Fremantle supervising producer. I thought that was easy; I realized later that it wasn't that simple.

I learned so many details about the "Idol" show format from Sheldon that it confirmed a lot of theories in my mind regarding the science of the show. I learned bits of information about the show in the other countries.

Being the 35th "Idol" franchisee, it is a surprise that we, a singing-contest-happy country, did not get the franchise earlier. Indonesia just ended its third season; India and Singapore are about to wind up their second.

Arabic version

The "Pan-Arabian Idol" is very interesting. Arabic songs are not like the usual Western pop songs that last only three minutes; their songs can stretch up to eight to 15 minutes. It just isn't possible to cut them short. That means the show lasted more than three hours at least per episode in that country's edition.

Everything I expected about the "Idol" format came to pass—from the structured audition process (from the "cattle call" to the selection of the Top 24); to the unusual number of contestants who thought they were "Idol" material.

It seemed like ABC 5 had everything down to the last detail written in their voluminous template. Plus many other things besides, like the coterie of security people, the unbelievable number of production people, the many, many cameras and crew and segment producers and writers.

It could have been an executive producer's nightmare to put it all together.

Only during the final show-



PLAYING shutterbug for (from left) Francis M., guest judge Lea Salonga, finalist Jeli Mateo and Pilita Corrales

down at the Araneta Coliseum was it revealed to me that there were only two people from ABC 5 handling the production. All the rest were freelancers.

Moonlighting staff

What? Yesiree! Most of them were moonlighting from either the *Kapamilya* or *Kapuso* channels! And that included the judges and the host.

There was no hesitation or tentativeness when Pilita, Francis, Ryan Agoncillo and I got together for the first time. Working with pros is always a delight, so it didn't matter if Mamita is a *Kapuso*; Francis, a host on "Eat Bulaga" (an independent production but a GMA 7 anchor show nevertheless) or Ryan 1 (host Agoncillo) and Ryan 2 (that's me!) are both *Kapamilya* artists.

I did host my own ABS-CBN show that lasted almost six years (1988 to 1994). That makes me a *Kapamilya* alumni, although not an exclusive artist. I had worked as Pilita's music director for some time, and we were together, too, on "Ang Bagong Kampeon."

The four of us hit it off right away. We concentrated on the work at hand.

Listening to about 70 artists a day is not difficult, especially if we were only tasked to separate the grain from the chaff. When Pilita, Francis and I got on board to start dispensing the Gold Ticket, it was a cinch.

Early on, we discovered that we were giving out the gold passes so easily—because the singers were pretty good! Perci had to step in to halt the gold spree and to give us a hurried lecture on the number of people we were sending to Hollywood, er, Manila.

The quota was 150. Better tighten the grip on the spigot or we would be sending all 300 to Hollywood, er, Manila. That meant two things: 1) Where will the excess contestants be billeted? 2) Were we willing to listen to all of them again?

No, I wasn't willing to listen to all of them again. So we raised the bar and threw away the door-mat.

The remaining contestants had to squeeze through a tight window. This was when the unique "Idol" experiences started to happen—the begging, the crying, the cajoling, the begging, the crying, the crying, the rying, and later the cursing and the gnashing of teeth.

Some scenes were contrived, of course, owing to

the fact that the disgruntled contestants just aped what they had seen on "American Idol."

The Visayan and Mindanao contestants did not curse as much. Not many of them had seen "AI." Besides, it seems un-Pinoy to do so, since we are more polite and accepting as a people.

Each contestant was herded to a room for an exit interview where he or she could curse or cry to his/her heart's content. This served two purposes: it let off steam and allowed the cameras to catch and record a unique "Idol" aspect.

All these were in the template.

The second level of auditions at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) was the most memorable of all the audition processes I have ever experienced. The finalists and contestants attest to this, too.

The contestants were put to a harrowing battery of tests to prove their talent, determination, stamina and willingness to embrace tasks set out for them.

The first day had all 170 or so gold pass holders go through a chorus line audition bearing their original numbers in the same clothes they wore on the first day they auditioned. This time each contestant could hear how he or she fared compared to the others in the chorus line.

Not a hard task

There were at least 15 singers in the line, and they were instructed to sing a portion of their original audition song. After all had sung, each group of 15 was sent in again to listen to the verdict of the judges.

Only 81 were chosen to move on to the next level. This was not a hard task for the judges. It is easiest to see who are exceptional when there are clear comparisons to be made.

The Top 81 singers were grouped into threes and given song choices to learn overnight and perform the next day. The group dynamics here changed the fates of a lot of people. But the better singers prevailed again.

Judging in this portion was a bit more difficult because we had to see the effort they put in to perform as best as they could while competing with their teammates.

The announcement of the Top 40 was the most grueling.

The 81 singers were divided into four, and placed in different rooms. There were 20 people in each of the rooms—two rooms would make it to the Top 40; the other two would be dismissed.

The announcement spiel and sequence followed a template. Two rooms reverberated with cheers, while silence, and later, howls of protest and a chorus of

disbelief from the other two rooms ensued after the announcements.

This second night is such an emotional evening because many of those who have bonded throughout the process thus far were finally separated. But there was no time for goodbyes since the Top 40 contestants were quickly herded into another meeting for them to choose songs they would sing the next day.

They had to pick from a list of six songs. This was make-or-break time, and they had only one night and one chance to hurdle the test.

The third and ultimate day in Hollywood, er, Manila—to be more specific, at the CCP—was a day of either final cheer or final gloom for the remaining singers. Judging here was the toughest.

There were so many good singers crowding to get into the Top 24.

The deliberation to choose the Top 24 was heartbreaking. Many also-deserving singers did not make the final cut. This was our last day as judges, because the next level of competitions would entail changing our roles to being mirrors of truth, and providers of guidance. Henceforth, viewers would make the decisions.

Clear assessments

Shifting gears, the judges were advised to give clear reactions or assessments of the performers.

This being live television, whatever we said could affect the singers' chances. At the start, the competition was done on Saturday, with band and sound rehearsals on Friday, while the results night was held on Sunday.

Voting via text or phone happened right after competition night (called "Spectaculars" in the template) and stretched until 8:30 p.m. the following day. Later in the competition, this 20-hour voting time became two hours.

I made it a point to sit through Friday rehearsals, take down notes, return the next day for the final Saturday run-through and write down my final assessment in a notebook right before the "Spectaculars" started. More often than not, I ended up saying exactly what I had observed and written down, although sometimes I get stupefied when the performers suddenly changed their attacks on the song during the actual performance!

I enjoyed every bit of time listening to the singers rehearse. These guys are good, I kept telling myself. But I had to look for other dimensions in their performance that could help them improve their chances of being the "Idol" winner. That included being very detached from them. That was quite hard for me to do.

Lesson in detachment

I wanted so much to approach each one of them immediately after they rehearsed to tell them how to improve their interpretation, to enumerate their flaws and to focus on their strengths. But the template specified that judges should be detached from the contestants.

Truly, it is difficult to give a fair and truthful assessment if one is tainted or has any emotional attachment whatsoever. We were looking for the best of the best, and we were reminded every time before the show to "tell the truth."

The truth is easy to tell. How-

LEARNING to dance the hula with Mamita
PHOTO BY FRANCIS MAGALONA

'In the end, only the viewing public will decide who best deserves to win'

ever, the amount of truth one can say, and the style of delivering it could vary from one person to another, and from one song to next, from one judge to another.

One can probably concentrate on the number of times a singer hit the wrong notes, or the number of times he did an annoying habit, or the way she gave a lack-luster performance, a tentative attack, a stirring performance, a strong voice, a splendid interpretation, the wrong key for the singer, wrong words and pronunciation, etc.

The permutations are endless and we have to be constantly interesting since vocal performance is both an art and a science.

Validations

What lessons or validations are apparent from the "Idol" show?

1) This show confirms the deep reserve of natural singing talent in the country, from the tricycle-riding to the chauffeured lot, from the parochial-school to the university-bred, from the employee to the boss. Filipinos not only love to sing; they have the voices to match the passion.

2) Talent is supreme. A natural gift has infinitely more weight than a skill acquired through study. But a gifted performer that does not come with a generous heart will not be gifted with a reciprocating, admiring audience.

3) Next to talent is that all-important character that exudes from the performer. It is not the mysterious X factor that we are made to believe. It is simply the person's charm, sincerity and humility that draw the audience to him or her.

4) Great talent enhances the person's external appearance. An enhanced appearance can never fill in for the lack of talent.

5) Idols can never hide the truth from the audience, especially the TV audience. Every smile, every answer, every smirk is seen and the corresponding reaction is magnified a thousand times.

6) There are no "anointed" singers in the "Idol" tilt. Every contestant is treated equally. The finalists who made it to the top waited in line together with everyone else, and went through the same grueling procedure.

7) The job to choose the best possible singers to be included in the Top 24 rests solely on the judges. No other person or entity, not even ABC 5 bigwigs, has any say on who should, or should not land in the Top 24.

8) No one knows exactly what the future brings. Contestants and supporters should always be hopeful and give their best at all times and accept graciously whatever the outcome is.

9) It is very important to have your close family and community support you. With a web of close friends that graduates into a network of admirers, one becomes an "Idol" without having to win the competition.

10) You can buy for yourself as many votes as you want, but in the end, only the people decide who deserves the title "Philippine Idol."

CATCHING a few Zs between auditions.

RYAN LIM



NGAYONG GABI NA!

REGINE VELASQUEZ • OGIE ALCASID • BONG REVILLA • RICHARD GUTIERREZ • ANGEL LOCSIN
JANNO GIBBS • JOEY DE LEON • VIC SOTTO • JAYA RAMSEY • SUNSHINE DIZON • JOEY MARQUEZ
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RAYMART SANTIAGO • JEAN GARCIA • PIA GUANIO • KYLA REDFORD WHITE • IZA CALZADO •
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NATIONAL artist and film director Eddie Romero makes his hand prints on a clay slab at Yapak, Baguio's Walk of Fame. PHOTOS BY TOOTS SOBERANO / PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU



LITO Lapid, above, waves to fans during the parade that preceded the Walk of Fame event. At left, the senator-actor goes through the foot print procedure. The Hollywood prototype requires only the hand and shoe prints of celebrities. Yapak organizers say foot prints add a local touch to the Philippine version.

First 3 on Baguio Walk of Fame

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE summer capital gave National Artist Eddie Romero, actor Cesar Montano and Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid their own slabs on the city's "Walk of Fame," which emulates the world-famous attraction at the Graumann's Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

The inauguration of "Yapak" on Friday kicked off the Baguio leg of the

forthcoming 22nd Metro Manila Film Festival. The city was invited to join the film festival in 2004 when the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), its organizer, decided to "nationalize" the festival.

Baguio's main role in the last two years was to host a parade of stars under the helm of actor Ramon "Ching-goy" Alonso. Friday's event was the city's first innovation on festival traditions, said Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer.

A long pause

It took some coaxing for Romero to shed his footwear. Yapak required the

veteran director to provide imprints of his bare hands—and feet—on hardening clay.

(Sid Graumann, who built the 89-year-old theater in Hollywood, came up with the idea of putting celebrity footprints in wet cement, but his Walk of Fame, to this day, only require stars' hand and shoe prints alongside their signatures.)

"[Romero] paused for a very long time [when we asked him to go barefoot], and we had to explain every detail to him," said artist Rafael Kapuno.

Kapuno, a member of the Baguio Community of Volunteers Movement

(BCVM), which executed the concept, said taking the stars' foot imprints was necessary to keep the concept Filipino.

Romero, Montano and Lapid appeared surprised when men wearing g-strings seated them each on a blue stool and massaged their feet with warm water as part of the ritual.

Five yearly

They were then asked to set their feet on an inch of hardening clay, which was encased in small wooden boxes. After the attendants washed off the grime, the trio imprinted their handprints, and autographs on their clay slabs.

"The slabs will be hardened in an oven and installed in front of a selected cinema [inside a local mall]," said Gabriel Keith, the project's spokesman.

Lapid, who was honored for his portrayals of "poor boys" cast out by society, appeared to relish the event.

Montano, cited for the acclaim he garnered by portraying national hero Jose Rizal, was cheered on by his wife, actress Sunshine Cruz.

Romero was the last of the three to stand barefoot in the clay. He was honored for elevating film directing in the country.

Five show business stalwarts will be invited to Yapak every year.

Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. and movie producer Lily Monteverde were to have joined the trio on Friday, but they didn't make it to the inaugural rites.



CESAR Montano's turn at the slab.



BUBOY during the parade, with his wife Sunshine.



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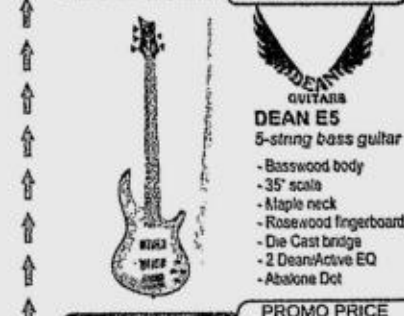


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RONNIE's last photo taken with a select group he was said to have considered his "da-bar-lads."

'I heard Da King groan'

Remembering FPJ's
last night with pals

By Tomas M. Palces, Jr.
Contributor

FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER 2004, Bach Apacible and Fernando Poe, Jr. were conversing on the phone—Bach was in Gourmet's Café in Silang, Cavite; Ronnie in FPJ Studio in Quezon City. Ronnie invited the *barkada* (or, as he put it, *da-bar-lads*) to a Christmas party on Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at the studio's basketball court. Just a small group, he said, just very close friends. Show biz colleagues would be invited to another party on Dec. 16, when he and wife Susan celebrated their wedding anniversary. Bach blocked Dec. 11 on her calendar and looked forward to the day with happy anticipation—not knowing that she would, in the end, wish that day had never come!

8:30 p.m. Bach and I hit the Aguinaldo highway in Silang, headed for FPJ Studio.

9:10 p.m. Bach received a text message from Nanette Lozano. "Wru na daw?"

10 p.m. We finally reach our destination. Earlier, we had received a second text message, either from Lousell Camus or Ningning Gonzalez: "Bakit daw ang tagal 'nyo?" We could imagine the

annoyance on Ronnie's face! I parked my car right in front of the studio's main door. Bach thought aloud, "Bakit parang ang lungkot ng party?"

I found my way to Ronnie's table and shook hands with him. "Why now only?" he asked with a discernable aura of dreariness about him. (I would learn later that Ronnie had been complaining of intermittent headaches, which he had attributed to new reading glasses. I also learned from Susan Tagle, Ronnie's *Girl Friday*, that he had been editing his old movies all day, with Jimmy Fabregas improving the instrumentation of the theme songs.) "Promdi kasi kami, Ron," I replied for lack of a better thing to say. Across the table, the gentlemanly Eddie Garcia chuckled at my silly rejoinder. Then it was Bach's turn to explain to Ronnie why we were late. Ronnie listened without saying a word—not even when she hugged him as a peace offering.

One game Ronnie loved to play with friends is called "good time." He'd make the victim feel ostracized by ignoring her. But before long, Ronnie would make up for his "mischief" by showering the victim (that night it was Bach) with chocolates, roses and everything nice—sometimes expensive!

(But Boots Anson-Roa divulged on the last night of Ronnie's wake in Santo Domingo Church: "Pag ginud time ka ni

Ronnie, love ka niya.")

10:50 p.m. While enjoying a sumptuous meal (I had my back turned to the table where Ronnie, Mayor Jojo Binay, Cong. Chiz Escudero, Eddie Garcia, Jose Romulo were seated) I heard Ronnie on the phone. He was congratulating Manny Pacquiao for winning his latest world title bout. "Congratulations Manny!" he said. "Hinay-hinay sa tagumpay!"

10:55 p.m. Bach decided to end Ronnie's favorite game. She wrote him a note, "Pwede ka bang ma-i-table?" Ronnie asked the waiter who brought him the note to read it for him. Then he crumpled the note and seemed to be standing up. The *barkada* all thought he was reacting to the note. "Papunta na siya..." But Ronnie was losing his balance. The hand that held the crumpled note went right back to the chair to support his weight.

Instantly, the tables were deserted, and Ronnie was swallowed up in a cluster of caring friends who didn't know exactly what to do apart from massaging his legs as Bach did, supporting his back as the men did.

"Sir, dalhin ka namin sa hospital?" Susan Tagle was aware of the unwritten rules. *Da King* had to know everything that would be done for him. "Dalhin na natin." Mayor Binay decided before Ronnie could nod.

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Willie Revillame vs studio exec at Kapamilya event

THREE RELIABLE WITNESSES TOLD THE INQUIRER Entertainment about the heated exchange of words between "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame and ABS-CBN exec Enrico Santos onstage—and backstage—during the "Kapamilya" Christmas special on Wednesday.

There was a "pushing incident" onstage in full view of the live audience at the Meralco Theater, and then Revillame reportedly confronted Santos after the finale.

He was heard cursing Santos, and blurting out, "Pinahiya mo ako (You embarrassed me)!"

To which, Santos retorted: "It was just a joke."

"It was scary," said one of our eyewitnesses. "Nerve-wracking."

"It was unfortunate," another one said. "There was a look of anger on Enrico's face when he pushed Willie. And Willie was seething when he confronted Enrico after."

RUSHES

"People were talking about it all night," our third source added. "Although they must've been both very tired. It had been a long day."

INQUIRER Entertainment tried to reach the protagonists, who both refused to issue statements.

In fact, Revillame was a no-show on his noon-time program on Thursday and Friday.

"He lost his voice," said a producer.

We can't help but wonder about the pushing bit. Was that because Revillame made the studio execs do the "Boom-Ta-Rat"?

Bona fide TV star

LOS ANGELES—Kicking back on a couch with a hot cup of tea, Taylor Hicks looks as comfortable backstage at the "Tonight Show" as he might in his own home. When Jay Leno, the talk show's host, pops into Hicks' dressing room to say hello, the gray-haired soul singer is unfazed—a moment that reflects just how much "American Idol" has changed

the 30-year-old's life.

A year ago, Hicks was a struggling musician unknown to those outside the small Southern clubs where he performed. Today, he is a bona fide TV star and major-label recording artist whose self-titled solo debut hit stores Tuesday.

"It's mind-blowing," Hicks told the Associated Press before taking the "Tonight Show" stage recently. "This is what happens when you catch a break. I'm very thankful and very gracious for what the show has done for me."

More than 63 million votes were cast to determine this year's "AI," and the majority of people chose Hicks over Katherine McPhee as the winner in May, shifting his music career into warp speed.

He spent the summer touring the country with his fellow finalists. When the concert wrapped in September, Hicks began his tutelage with legendary music mogul Clive Davis to craft an album that would be a fitting follow to his star-making "Idol" turn.

It was an "intimidating" experience, Hicks said, but he's happy with the result.

The past year was packed with accolades for



TAYLOR HICKS

him, besides earning the "Idol" title. He was named People magazine's "Hottest Bachelor" for 2006, a distinction he said left him "completely flattered and completely freaked out."

The honor hasn't led to romance, and Hicks said he would hardly have time if it did.

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Look, Jay, look

HONG KONG—Taiwanese pop star and acting novice Jay Chou says he couldn't look Chinese actress Gong Li in the eye when they started shooting scenes for their upcoming movie "Curse of the Golden Flower."

"I was nervous, so my line of sight wasn't directed at her eyes," Chou, 27, said in a TV special posted on the Chinese news Web site Sina.com on

Friday. "After doing a few scenes with her, she helped me relax slowly." "Curse of the Golden Flower," which opens Dec. 21, revolves around the power struggle between an ancient Chinese king (Chou Yun-fat), his queen (Gong) and his three sons. Chou plays one of the princes.

The movie is directed by famed Chinese director Zhang Yimou.

Chou is one of Chinese pop's biggest names, but he has started to cultivate an acting career.

Oscar a 'nice surprise'

ROME—Italian composer Ennio Morricone, who is to receive an honorary Oscar in February, on Thursday said the award was "a nice surprise" which made him happy.

Morricone is the man behind the memorable music used in 1960s spaghetti westerns such as "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" and classic movies such as "Cinema Paradiso" and has composed more than 300 scores in a career spanning 45 years.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said on Wednesday he will be presented with the award at the 2007 Oscars in Hollywood on Feb. 25.

"I am stunned but happy because the Oscar is coming my way while I am still fully active in my profession," the 78-year old said. "In my life, I've never sought the center stage. I have never asked a director to be allowed to work with him and I've never asked anybody to promote me, especially not in America. The Oscar is a nice surprise. I had stopped thinking about it."

'Idol' wannabe now screen idol

NEW YORK—Last year, Jennifer Hudson's options were running out.

Her 15 minutes of "American Idol" fame were waning. She was without the recording contract she so desired. She had no manager to guide her. And she was spending her days in a recording studio with "random producers," singing songs for an audience yet to be determined.

Hudson began to think that her dreams of stardom might be fading—and that she was wasting her time.

But she didn't give up.

"I knew there was something in store [for me]," she says.

It only took a few months for her to find out what that something would be: the pivotal role of the temperamental, tragic Effie White in the long-awaited movie production of the '80s Broadway musical "Dreamgirls," loosely based on Diana Ross and the Supremes.

Though the film stars heavyweights like Academy Award-winner Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy and Beyoncé, it's the 25-year-old Hudson, making her feature film debut, who has become the movie's revelation with a breathtaking performance that's sparking Oscar talk.



GONG LI



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Golden Globe nominees named

LOS ANGELES—AFTER A year round of film screenings, including a last-minute trip to New York to watch a rushed version of Sienna Miller's "Factory Girl," our (Hollywood Foreign Press Association) nominations to the 64th Annual Golden Globe Awards were announced at the traditional early morning ceremonies at The Beverly Hilton.

I stayed up till 3 on Monday morning to fill out my nominations ballot. I thought this year was more competitive so I was actually more excited to hear the nominations than last year when I voted for the first time.

One of the issues before the nominations reminder list was finalized by our group was whether Jennifer Hudson, the "American Idol" finalist who gave an excellent performance in the musical-turned-movie "Dreamgirls," should be nominated for lead or supporting actress. Initially, the opinion was that Jennifer should be nominated in the Best Actress Award category—that's a testament to the impact of her portrayal of Effie White, the one who was left out in the fictionalized account of the rise of Diana Ross and the Supremes.

In the end, a decision was made to put Jennifer in the supporting actress race while Beyoncé Knowles, who portrays the character inspired by Ms. Ross, gets to compete in the lead actress derby. At last Thursday morning's rites, at the ungodly hour of 5:30 a.m., both women cinched nominations.

There was a collective laughter of amuse-

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Ruben V. Nepales



ment and appreciation in the ballroom when Jessica Biel, who announced the nominations along with Rosario Dawson and Matthew Perry, gamely recited "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" twice—once when she announced Sacha Baron Cohen as a Best Actor nominee in the Comedy or Musical category and when the British comedian's film itself was named in the running for Best Comedy or Musical.

Matthew, who had the luck of hearing his name as one of the nominees for Best Actor in a Mini-Series or Movie Made for Television, was inspired enough to break into a "Good morning, I love you all" when his turn came to read his share of the nominations list.

As usual, flutes of champagne were ready to be sipped by the doors when the ceremony was all over but journalists and publicists rushed out to file their stories and count their victories and losses, respectively. The TV show folks stayed behind to interview Rosario (whose cheerfulness energized most of us who woke up at 3 in the morning to be at the Hilton on time), Matthew, Jessica and our president, Philip Berk.

By mid-morning, reactions were trickling in via e-mail. Here are excerpts from some

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Golden Globe nominees named

From page K1



RQsario Dawson, left, and Jessica Biel

JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

happy nominees:

Leave it to Sacha to come up with the most amusing comment: "I am extremely honored. I'm very proud as well for my fellow writers as well as our director Larry Charles, and our producer Jay Roach, and am very thankful for the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's belief and acknowledgment of our film. I have been trying to let Borat know this great news but for the last four hours both of Kazakhstan's telephones have been engaged. Eventually, Premier Nazarbayev answered and said he would pass on the message as soon as Borat returned from Iran, where he is guest of honor at the Holocaust Denial Conference."

Leonardo DiCaprio, unprecedented double nominee for Best Actor (Drama): "It is a privilege to be mentioned in the same breath with actors like Peter O'Toole, Will Smith and Forest Whitaker. I'm grateful to the HFPA for their recognition, and want to deeply thank my friends Marty Scorsese and Ed Zwick for their extraordinary work as directors."

Clint Eastwood, also a double nominee, for Best Director: "Flags of our Fathers and Letters from Iwo Jima are projects that I hold very dear and I am thrilled that the members of the HFPA share my enthusiasm for these two movies."

Helen Mirren topped them all with two nominations for Best Actress in a Mini-Series or Movie Made for Television and a Best

Actress (Drama) nod. She was on the set of her new film, "Inkheart," with Andy Serkis, the actor who played Gollum and King Kong. Director Iain Softley hid champagne bottles around the set and when it was announced that Helen scored three nods, the cast surprised her with the bubbly.

Helen was reportedly so touched by the whole experience: "I am extremely honored to be recognized for... 'The Queen,' 'Elizabeth I' and 'Prime Suspect.' This has been an unprecedented year for me, and I am grateful to have had such well-written roles and to have worked with wonderful directors, actors and crews. I am amazed by the timeliness of 'The Queen,' a story about a leader out of touch with the people, and how the film has struck such a chord with audiences, both British and American, and around the world. Likewise the roles of Elizabeth I and Jane Tenison are so very different from each other, but both are powerful, vulnerable and flawed women, and have a strong impact on audiences as well."

Meryl Streep didn't drop her Ice Queen fashion editor's chilly remark, "That's all" in "The Devil Wears Prada" but actually exclaimed: "Thank you, thank you, thank you! I am thrilled and happy and can't wait for that big fabulous party!"

Emily Blunt, Meryl's poor assistant in "Devil," another double nominee: "It's a huge thrill to

have been nominated for performances in two films that are really close to my heart. I had so much fun working with the wonderful casts and crews of 'The Devil...' and 'Gideon's Daughter' and I can't wait to speak to Meryl Streep and Bill Nighy to congratulate them on their nominations."

Forest Whitaker, our one-time short-term resident of Balic-Balic: "I am going to spend the rest of the day enjoying this extraordinary compliment, and I truly hope that this nomination will encourage people to go see 'The Last King of Scotland.'"

Brad Pitt, elated not only for his Best Supporting Actor nod but for the nominations of two films where he served as a co-producer: "I am so pleased to be nominated along with my fellow actors from 'Babel' for a Golden Globe. As a producer with Plan B, I'd also like to congratulate Annette Bening ('Running With Scissors') and all the nominees from 'The Departed.'"

The Great Martin Scorsese: "It made waking up early well

Aretha Franklin got more respect when "Never Gonna Break My Faith" earned a Best Original Song nod for composers Bryan Adams, Eliot Kennedy and Andrea Remanda: "Whatta way to start your day, to get a call from your publicist saying you've got a Golden Globe nomination! First I said no, then I said yes, then I said noooooo, then I said yesssss! My congratulations to the songwriters. When a song you've sung gets a nomination of this magnitude... I love it. What can I say? I'm just thrilled!"

Director Mel

We continue excerpts of our interview with controversial director Mel Gibson, whose new film, "Apocalypto," was nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category. While "Apocalypto" and Clint's "Letters from Iwo Jima" are American productions, these films are in a foreign language. So going by our rules, they ended up in the best foreign film race. This made an already tight race (where "The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros" was in the running)



MATTHEW PERRY

REUTERS

worthwhile."

Eddie Murphy, who came back to life via "Dreamgirls" (he sings! he acts!): "I am happily humbled and honored."

Beyonce Knowles, a first-time nominee: "Being a part of 'Dreamgirls,' and working with a director as wonderful as Bill Condon, was an opportunity of a lifetime for me, enabling me to grow as an actress. To be nominated in two categories (Best Performance by an Actress in a Comedy or Musical and Best Original Song-Musical Picture) is an honor that I graciously accept."

even more competitive.

Do you feel that you are being targeted? And how are you going to get out of it because people are not going to give you a lot of flexibility.

I don't feel like I am being targeted. I think you're a target if you make yourself one or if you see yourself as a target so it's not an issue. I will do what I do and I don't have to depend on a whole lot of other people. I can just do it. It's all about perception. I'm not looking at the other guy over there. You got to take care of

yourself. It's my side of the street I got to keep clean.

So you don't feel the need to go out there and help change people's perception of you?

You can't change people's perception of you. It's just going to be what it is so all you can do is just take care of your own stuff. You can't change anyone.

While some critics are praising this movie as a powerful one, there are many who are saying it is extremely violent. What's your reaction to these comments?

I don't think it's as violent as "Braveheart." I think it's merciful (laughter). In "Braveheart," there was a whole sequence at the end of the guy having his entrails ripped out and this one has less. You don't really see anything. You don't see a heart popping out of the chest or anything. It's a violent world so, of course, you have to tackle the subject. The amazing thing about that culture was that they were so sophisticated and so long ago. They knew about the constellations. They had a very intricate calendar. They had letters. They had libraries. You juxtapose that against some of the savagery. It was an odd dichotomy. You can't get away from the violent aspect of it, I think as their civilization began to sort of lose its feet a little bit. All the rot started to creep in.

You really don't think it's that violent?

I could have really gone to town when that kid gets it in the throat, right? But you saw it from about 80 yards away, okay? You didn't actually see a chest cavity with a hand going in. It's less violent than "Braveheart." Everyone likes to beat up on me for this violence. People think it's more violent because I have fooled them into caring for the characters. When it matters, when it gives a shit, it seems more violent. If you're watching Jean-Claude, whatever his name is, you don't give a shit (laughter).

Or if you watch the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part IV," do you care about the pimply teenager on the meat hook? No. You don't know who he is so you're inclined not to care. You're just inclined to laugh at it.

You seem to be fascinated with civilizations of the past. If you were to make a contemporary

period movie, what should we expect?

I'd end up burned at the stake if I made a contemporary movie. It would have to be some kind of light fare (laughter), with maybe a hangnail involved—that's it for violence. Aaaggghhh (laughter)! I think the point is that history repeats itself or regurgitates itself and that other heroes and cultures are like mirrors for us. We're not so different from the Romans, Greeks or the Ottoman Empire.

You have a large family (seven kids, most of them born in the 1980s). Your daughter just got married and your older sons must be in college. How are things like at home these days?

Oh, fabulous. Things have to move on. It's like having a house full of young adults and fortunately, they like to hang around. They come back, which means I think we might have done something half right (laughter). They laugh, eat and scratch with us, which is good.

And your thoughts of your daughter being married?

Hey, if she's happy, I'm extremely happy.

When you mess up, what is the romantic thing that you do to make up?

Oh, it's usually a hair shirt in the backyard with a leash (laughter). No, it's okay. You just take those things as you come and play it by ear. Women—even one you've known for a great deal of time—are still a mystery. That's good in a way.

It must have satisfied you that after all the drubbing that "The Passion of the Christ" got from the media, it was embraced around the world. Did your faith grow stronger as a result of that whole experience?

Of course, I was happy. One likes to have his work watched, appreciated and debated on. They say that if your work doesn't create something of a stir, then it's probably not worth much. It's something that I had not foreseen, honestly, but it took me by surprise. So I was like, all right, let's see where it goes. I was gratified that it did well.

And about your faith?

That's a personal matter.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.



DIRECTOR Mel Gibson on the set of "Apocalypto"



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Fantasia bids past goodbye

From page K4

I still get a lot of "Idol" questions, I still get a lot of interviewers asking me about the Idols. I can't break away.

Do you want to break away?

At first, I was like that, I'm gonna be honest. (But) you have to sit back and think sometimes because sometimes, you're moving so fast, you start to forget that you could have been [just sitting] at home if it had not been for 65 million votes. I want to be viewed as an artist ... at the same time, I'll never forget that.

Nekesa Mumbi Moody, AP



FANTASIA just having fun now. AP

One scare tactic ...

From page K4

casid for his songs and his gift as a comedian. But he hopes that, sooner rather than later, Ogie will tackle a serious role for a change, "to really bring out the thespian in him."

Well, Franco, we're happy to inform you that, some years ago, Ogie "dared" to play no less than our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, in Nonoy Gallardo's hit musical, "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?"—and did very well indeed in the challenging role!

But we agree with you that Ogie should tackle another challenging role next year. Any suggestions?

Escape Club opens

On Dec. 20, a new dance club, Escape Club & Restaurant, open in

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The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

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1. Receipt from prospective bidders of LOI including Application for Eligibility	December 13, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	December 15, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	December 18, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility	December 20, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 22, 2006
6. Pre-Bid Conference	December 26, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	December 28, 2006

The Municipality of San Manuel, Pangasinan assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

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Security Services (ITB 005-06)	P 7,128,000.00	Dec. 28, 2006 10 a.m. - 12 nn	Jan. 10, 2007 10 a.m. - 12 nn	P 6,000.00
Janitorial Services (ITB 006-06)	P 3,845,905.90	Dec. 28, 2006 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.	Jan. 10, 2007 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.	P 3,500.00
Drivers (ITB 007-06)	P 511,347.84	Dec. 28, 2006 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.	Jan. 10, 2007 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.	P 600.00
Drinking Water with H&C Dispenser (ITB 008-06)	P 142,032.00	Dec. 28, 2006 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.	Jan. 10, 2007 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.	P 150.00

The Eligibility and Bid Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, carolof ARTURO N. DELA CRUZ, JR., 4th Floor Blas F. Ople Bldg., Ortigas corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City, T. (02) 7277776; F. (02) 7268919; email: bac.poea@yahoo.com, after payment for the Eligibility and Bid Documents. Only bidders who have purchased the Eligibility and Bid documents shall be eligible to attend in the Pre-Bid Conference and participate in the Bidding process.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation-A (IRR-A) as amended.

For security service activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 11, 2006
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2006, 10 a.m.
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 10, 2007, 10 a.m.

For Janitorial Services

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 11, 2006
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2006, 1 p.m.
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 10, 2007, 1 p.m.

For Service Contractors (Drivers)

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 11, 2006
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2006, 2 p.m.
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 10, 2007, 2 p.m.

For Water Supply with H&C Dispenser

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 11, 2006
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2006, 1 p.m.
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 10, 2007, 3 p.m.

The POEA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **ATTY. VIVECA C. CATALIG**
BAC CHAIRPERSON

(PDI - December 10 & 17, 2006)

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Free Consultation:
Contact Details:

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(Immigration Consultant)
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2127 Australia
Telefax (612)-9737 9506
Mobile: 0401 465494
Email: eljbautista@tpg.com.au

Philippines
LAW OFFICE OF:
Eldipio R. Bautista, Jr.
Filinvest-1, Batasan Hills
Quezon City, M.M. 1126
PHILIPPINES
Tel/Fax (632) 9314046
(632) 9510180

Brion dismisses question on citizenship

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY Arturo D. Brion on Friday categorically denied reports that he is a Canadian citizen and should not be holding position in any public office in the country.

In a letter addressed to Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, Brion said that he is a natural born Filipino citizen and has never at any time acquired any other citizenship.

Rosales had questioned Brion's role in the government, alleging that the DOLE secretary holds foreign citizenship, which is not allowed under Philippine laws.

"The reports correctly stated that I had migrated to Canada during the time of President Corason Aquino," he said. "However, I never did apply, much less acquire, Canadian citizenship during my stay in Canada."

While in Canada, he took up masteral studies in Labor Law at the Osgoode Hall, York University and subsequently practiced law in Ontario.

"While I did work for the Management Board Secretariat of Toronto and was a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Canadian citizenship is not required to be admitted to the Ontario Bar and to work as lawyer in Canada," Brion said.

He clarified that the name Arturo A. Brion that appears in the Canadian records as Canadian citizen, is his son who is a B.S. Computer Engineering graduate of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario and a law graduate of the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

"My son - Arturo Articon Brion - now practices Intellectual Property Law at Ottawa and is a registered patent agent for Canada and the United States," Brion said.

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Ginakit sails again

ELEGANTLY DECORATED BOATS CALLED *ginakit* will navigate again on Dec. 19 along the Rio Grande de Mindanao in an annual depiction of the coming of Shariff Kabunsuan.

On the culmination of a 5-day long festival named in honor of the man credited with establishing Islamic faith and culture in mainland Mindanao in the 14th century, the colorful and musical flotilla that has been the symbol of regal pomp will cap the fête recently adjudged by the ATOP (Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines) as Best Tourism Event in the Philippines (city category).

Already, 16 groups have expressed desire to participate in the *Ginakit* Fluvial Parade which has become a competition for the past three years. A *ginakit* must be made up of not less than 4 boats either joined together as one big boat or straddling each other while traversing from the mouth of the river up to the present-day city wharf.

UNESCO Commissioner Bai Sandra Sema, also City Tourism Council Chair, said that with the national recognition gained by the Shariff Kabunsuan Festival has become more imperative to make this year's celebration as "stylish, merry and always meaningful".

In keeping with that, regular features of the Festival, such as Kuyog Street Dancing and Inaul Fashion Show, will be complemented by Cultural Events, a Trade Fair, Civic-Military Parade, Grand Kanduli and the Festival of Lights. The latter is the newest feature of the celebration and will showcase lighting designs for the 10 tents to be set up by the *Liga ng mga Barangay* in the grounds of the New City Hall. The tents will be illuminated every night beginning Dec. 15 till the eve of the New Year. Variety shows will also be held in the New City Hall to provide entertainment to night-goers.

BCHS Batch 1968-1969 Alumni Homecoming

ALL BINANGONAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL Batch 68-69 alumni are invited to a homecoming celebration on Sunday, Dec. 17, 3 p.m. at Balag Restaurant, Binangonan, Rizal to be hosted by Mayor Cesar Ynares. For details, please contact Tessie Pons at 09228041255 or Tess Austria at 09266342968.

**MOU ON SPANISH LANGUAGE TRAINING**

Labor Secretary Arturo D. Brion and Director Jose Rodriguez Rodriguez of the Instituto Cervantes de Manila (ICM) shake hand shortly after signing the memorandum of understanding on Cooperation for the Organization and Administration of Courses on the Spanish Language and Culture between the Department of Labor and Employment and the Instituto Cervantes de Manila. The MOU designs to equip qualified overseas Filipino workers with Spanish language and a better understanding of Spanish culture and appreciation of Philippine-Spanish heritage programs.

PAMASKONG TRABAHO MEGA JOB FAIR 2006

The Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industries with Philippine Association of Local Service Contractors (PALSCON) and DZMM ABS-CBN in cooperation with Morato Business Club, DoLE QC-PESO and Mayor Sonny Belmonte of Quezon City successfully held the "Pamaskong TrABAHO-2006" at Tomas Morato Avenue-QC on Dec. 8. The Job Fair generated 2,000 job seekers with 800 hot-on-the-spot hiring from 50 different companies. Photo shows from left Lawyer Giovanni Melgar-President of PALSCON, Dr. Hernan Delizo-QCCCI Board of Director, Cory Quirino-guest, Rafael S. Chico-PALSCON/QCCCI Vice President, Aristotle C. Chico-VP-Human Resources of Global Excellence and Mr. Carl Balita-President of Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industries.



Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB NO.: 11-06-2006

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting all car dealers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Supply and Delivery of Two (2) units 4-Door Brand New Sedan
Brief Description : Sedan, 5.7 liter, multi-displacement, 16 valves, V8 engine, 340hp / 5,200 rpm, 390 lb-ft / 4,200 rpm, 5-speed automatic - RWD
Approved Budget : Six Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 6,500,000.00)
Source of Fund : Internally Funded

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila, Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 13, 2006 - January 9, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	December 28, 2006 (10:30 am)
3. Submission of Bids	January 10, 2007 (2 pm)
4. Opening of Bid	January 10, 2007 (2 pm onwards)

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Three Thousand Fifty & 00/100 Pesos (Php 3,250.00)**. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the BAC Secretariat Unit, Procurement & Property Department.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL A. FRANCISCO
Chairperson, BAC 3

(PDI - December 17 & 24, 2006)

Ragawaran ng Ugnayang Panlabas



Department of Foreign Affairs

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, Metro Manila
Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Foreign Affairs-Bids and Awards Committee (DFA-BAC) is inviting interested bidders to bid for the following projects:

- 1.) DIPLOMATIC POUCH DELIVERY SERVICE; and
- 2.) JANITORIAL AND PEST CONTROL SERVICES;

Interested bidders may acquire bid documents from 9 to 28 Dec. 2006 at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Undersecretary for Administration, 12th Floor, DFA Bldg., 2330 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, (tel. nos. 834-4066 and fax nos. 831-95-84), upon submission of Letter of Intent and payment of a **non-refundable fee**.

The Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to this bidding shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	SCHEDULE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE AND VENUE OF SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS
1. Diplomatic Pouch Delivery Services	Php 15,000,000 Fifteen Million Pesos	1st Pre-Bid: 28 Dec. 2006, Thursday, 2:30 p.m. at the Board Lounge, 12th Floor, DFA Bldg. 2nd Pre-Bid: 4 Jan. 2007, Wed., 2:30 p.m. (same venue)	10 Jan. 2007, at the Board Lounge Deadline for Submission of Bids: 2:00 p.m. Opening of Bids: 2:30 p.m.
2. Janitorial and Pest Control Services	Php 23,500,000 Twenty Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos	1st Pre-Bid: 28 Dec. 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the Board Lounge, 12th Flr., DFA Bldg. 2nd Pre-Bid: 4 Jan. 2007; 10:00 a.m. (same venue)	11 Jan. 2007 at the Board Lounge Deadline for Submission of Bids: 10:00 a.m. Opening of Bids: 10:30 p.m.

DFA-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reasons, and to waive any deficiencies and required formalities embodied therein. DFA-BAC assumes no obligations whatsoever to offset the expenses and/or losses the bidder may have incurred in the preparation of the bids. DFA-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, and/or not to award the contract, and makes no assurances that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) FRANKLIN M. EBDALIN
Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs
and Chairman, DFA-BAC

(PDI-Dec. 10 & 17, 2006)

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Chairman and CEO
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Mr. Rene Espinosa
Managing Director
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Mr. John Mangun
Managing Director
Amica Research Pte., Inc.

Mr. Francis Jesse Rebutilla
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Philippine Daily Inquirer

GUEST SPEAKER
Mr. Cecilio Pedro
President & CEO
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REQUIEMS
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BENJAMIN SORIANO SANTOS

*Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 14, 2006 at the age of 74.*

He is survived by his wife **Pilar**; children **Cristina** and **Michael Keppler**, and **Christopher** and **Debbie**; grandchildren **Michael** and **Casey**; sisters **Delia** and **Elvira**; in-laws **Alicia** and **Francisco** and their families.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 3, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Cremation will follow the 9:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, December 17, 2006.

LEOPOLDO "POL" D. PUJANTE

September 01, 1940 - December 15, 2006

His loving wife **LITA SALANGUIT**; children: **TONICHI**, **LEO** and **RONA**, **ERIC** and **MARISSA**, **PAMELA** and **LEOS** and **ANCHE**; grandchildren: **CHAMP**, **LUI ANN**, **LUIS ADRIAN**, **CAMILLE** and **SHAO** and all his relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Sto. Domingo Church Mortuary, Quezon Avenue.

Cremation will be on December 20, 2006, Wednesday, at Loyola Memorial Park-Crematory, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

**"For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten
Son, that whoever believes in
Him shall not perish but have
everlasting life." John 3:16**

People, Events & Products

The Coke Side of Life: Cebu Art Contest

PASSION CAN BEST BE EXPRESSED through art. In this story, Coca-Cola visits the Philippines' Queen City of the South, Cebu to encourage its budding artists to envision the Buhay (Life) Coke ideal.

One of the model markets being developed by the Operations Team of The Coca-Cola Export Corporation (TCCEC) - Philippines Division is the Cebu Model Market, or what the Cebuanos will come to call as "The New Larsian Barbecue Food Park." This food park facility is located at the heart of uptown Cebu and is an upgrade of the existing "Larsian Barbecue Stalls." This local landmark in Cebu City is where locals and visitors alike go to get a taste of the famous Cebu barbecue.

In partnership with Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia and the Provincial Government of Cebu, the new food park will feature forty-six food stalls exclusively selling and merchandising Coke beverages. It will also have a seating capacity of eight hundred forty and will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to cater to the Cebuanos' barbecue cravings.

A unique feature of the Larsian Barbecue Food Park design is the mixture of Coca-Cola Branding with Cebu Culture and Her-

itage. Art murals showcasing the best of the island will be part of the food park's facade as well as individual stall murals showcasing Coke as a part of everyday Cebuano Life.

To come up with the art designs for the individual stall murals, an art contest entitled "The Coke Side of Life: Cebu Art Contest" was conducted in colleges and universities in Cebu last September. Based on the contest theme "Everyday Cebu Life with Coca-Cola," a total of 134 college students submitted their artwork interpretations.

TCCEC-operations' Benedict Paulino explained how this innovative project came to be. "When the project team was coming up with the design, theme and concept for the Larsian Foodpark Facility, we wanted to balance the Coca-Cola Branding together with Cebu's culture. This was to give the Cebuanos a sense of ownership of the Foodpark. The art murals illustrating "Everyday Cebu Life with Coca-Cola" gave us creative and unique perspectives to the Cebuano culture and how Coke is a part of that rich heritage."

Benedict also shared that the project received overwhelming response. "We weren't expecting the participation and re-

sponse to the art contest to be as great as it was. The number of young artists who participated and the crowd enthusiasm to vote during the exhibit exceeded our expectations."

The forty winning artwork entries were decided by judges from the Cebu Provincial Government, TCCEC and Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc (CCBPI) representatives and public votes during the four-day exhibit. The top pre-selected artwork entries were then exhibited at the Ayala Center Cebu Mall last Sept. 29 to Oct. 2. These will then be reproduced as the stall mural designs and will be installed at each individual Larsian Barbecue Food Park stall.

"Our company and brand definitely gained ground and appreciation from the hearts of artists, art enthusiasts and the Cebuanos," shared Benedict. "To quote Raymund Fernandez, a recognized artist, art professor and newspaper columnist in Cebu, "Congratulations to the Coca-Cola Company for coming up with a successful project that promotes and supports the development of local art."

The Larsian Barbecue Food Park officially opened last Nov. 29.



3RD SPANISH PRODUCTS AND SERVICES EXPO

TNT Express Worldwide - the world leader in business-to-business express delivery service - showcased its services to the Spanish community during the recently concluded 3rd Spanish Products and Services Expo held at the Megatrade Hall, Megamall in Mandaluyong City where TNT is also one of

the event's main sponsors. Shown in photo are Senator Edgardo Angara, a prominent supporter of Spanish initiatives in the country today, with TNT president and general manager, Jose Luis Romero-Salas (extreme left), with TNT staff during the senator's stop-over at the TNT Express booth.



DEUTSCHE BANK ADOPTS A SCHOOL

Deutsche Bank, through the Deutsche Bank Asia Foundation, in cooperation with the Department of Education's (DepEd) 'Adopt-A-School Program' and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), recently donated funds that will be used in constructing a two-classroom school building for the benefit of Moonwalk Elementary School in Las Piñas City. This is the third Philippine school in as many years that Deutsche Bank has supported financially through the Deutsche Bank Asia Foundation. The first project was the construction of a

new building at the Silangan Elementary School I in Taguig in 2004, while the second was for a similar project for the Daanghari Elementary School in Navotas in 2005. Aiming to help improve the school's system by providing more classrooms, (from left) PBSP executive director Gil Salazar, Deutsche Bank chief country officer Enrico Cruz, PLDT and PBSP chair Manuel V. Pangilinan, DB chief operating officer Rhonell Fajardo, and DB Relationship manager Noel Dayrit, signed a memorandum of agreement making the deed of donation official.

DELL INVESTS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

During a recent visit by Richard "Dick" Hunter (left), vice president for Americas Customer Experience and Support of top computer maker Dell Inc, the company announced that it would soon open its second customer contact center in the country. According to Hunter, the decision to expand Dell's investment in the Philippines is a result of the efficiency of the first call center site in Pasay. "Our Pasay City team has done an excellent job in answering customer questions and resolving their issues," Hunter said. Meant to provide additional



technical support for US consumers, the new site in Quezon City is expected to open and take its first customer calls February of next year. With Hunter is Mike Garrison, country manager, Dell Philippines Inc.

All set for Giant Lantern Festival 2006

THIS YEAR, 12 BARANGAYS WILL attempt to bring home the championship trophy for the Giant Lantern Festival (GLF), the annual spectacle that has earned for the city worldwide fame. Each of the 12 Barangays, GLF 2006 committee chair Joel David said, was given P100,000 as subsidy in crafting their entries for the Dec. 16 competition. The entries will come from Barangays Del Pilar, Dolores, Maimpis, San Felipe, San Jose, San Juan, San Nicolas, San Pedro, Sta. Lucia, Sto. Niño, Sto. Rosario and Telabastagan. David said the City Government has released its regular subsidy of P1 million to help the barangays in shouldering the cost in making the 18-foot lanterns. Some P200,000 additional funds were also provided by the GLF committee to augment City Hall's subsidy. This year, the GLF will be ushered in by the "Intensity G" a Globe regional Roadshow at the City proper and kick-off ceremony for the week-long Food Fair in front of the City Hall. The two events were held on Dec. 15. From Dec. 17 to 20, David said, the entries will be shown in public exhibition at the Paskuhan Village in Barangay Sindalan on Dec. 21 back to Paskuhan from Dec. 22 to 23 and at the Metropolitan Church patio on Dec. 24. The GLF 2006 committee is composed of Mayor Oscar Rodriguez, honorary chair, Joel David, chair, Nestor S. Manglo, co chair, Ching Pangilinan, secretary, Agnes Romero, treasurer, Shirley Te, auditor and Councilor Reden Halili, PRO. The sub-committees are being led by Malyn Tuazon (reception); Chona Pamintuan (Food); Franco De Jesus (finance and sponsorship); Maureen Aquino (promotions and invitations); Halili (program and contest rules); Corito Panlilio-Lim (judges committee); Helen Punzalan and the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Picpa); and San Fernando Police Chief Audie Atienza (traffic security and safety). This year's sponsors include Globe Telecom, Coca-Cola, The Lakeshore, San Fernando Light and Power Company Pampanga's Best and San Miguel Corporation and SM Pampanga.

New San Jose Builders goes worldwide

AS PART OF ITS COMPANY VISION OF reaching out to our many kababayan both here and abroad, New San Jose Builders Inc (NSJBI) recently sent first vice president Cristia Bonifacio-Lin to the Barrio Fiesta festivities in Lampton Park, Hounslow, United Kingdom and two senior sales directors Noli Salud and Jorge Palatino to West Coast, USA.

NSJBI was invited to the Barrio Fiesta to join the roadshow and showcase the many features of Victoria Towers, the company's most recent and ambitious residential project. According to NSJBI president Rey L. Vergara, the company gives as much importance to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as its local clients because Filipinos abroad are always on the look out for worthy investments in the Philippines. "We believe our affordable condominium projects are worth every Filipino's hard-earned money," Vergara adds.

According to Bonifacio-Lin, the two-day event held last July 15 and 16 was a rousing success. She says that there is a huge number of Filipinos living in the UK, and that the Barrio Fiesta event is one of our countrymen's most anticipated gatherings.

"NSJBI came in at the right place and at the right time," she explains. "Many prospective buyers in the UK are tired of expensive condominium offers so when we presented them our Victoria Towers project, the response was very positive."

For the US Roadshow, Noli Salud and Jorge Palatino visited the cities of: Los Angeles, Glendale, Thousand Oaks, Fontana, Pomona, West Covina, Carson City, Cerritos, Long Beach, Torrance, Anaheim, San Francisco, Vallejo, Sacramento, South San Francisco, San Jose, Daly City, Union City, Hayward, San Mateo, Belmont, Westborough, Palo Alto and Las Vegas Nevada. "We were overwhelmed by the response of our Kababayans when we offered them our product. They can't believe that we can offer an affordable project at a prime location" Jorge Palatino shared. "We highly think that this is just a start of something bigger for New San Jose Builders Inc in terms of international market. We will definitely go back to US to do

more roadshows in the near future" Noli Salud adds with enthusiasm.

Each unit in Victoria Towers is 48 percent cheaper than those of other local real estate companies. NSJBI guarantees buyers that the project will be finished within two years, with an estimate appreciation value of as much as one million pesos (P1,000,000) within the same period. The company also offers an inexpensive P10,000 monthly amortization that keeps in mind the buyers' financial capacity to pay.

"Our payment scheme is designed to be as affordable as possible without compromising international standards of quality," explains Vergara. "Because New San Jose Builders Inc handles everything-being the builder, developer, and planner rolled into one-clients are assured there won't be any sudden and unforeseen add-on costs."

Victoria Towers will rise in a 4,529 sq. m. prime property at the corner of Timog and Panay Avenues. When completed, it will showcase 1,130 residential and 24 penthouse units. Owners can choose between single or combined loft type units, with each single unit offering 3 bedrooms, and a spacious foyer. Amenities include an infinity pool, a multi-purpose function room catering to at most 200 guests, a business center, a gym, a spa, day care, and a playground for kids.

Vergara says that because of the success of the Barrio Fiesta roadshow in the UK and the United States, New San Jose Builders Inc is joining more roadshows in Europe, USA, and the Middle East in the near future. "Like I've said, it's all a part of our company mission to reach out and serve our countrymen," Vergara enthuses.

Three-bedroom units are priced for as low as P1.5M. Area ranges from 41, 61 and 80 sqm respectively. Reservation fee is only P10,000 while amortization can be as low as P10,000. For inquiries, please call 448-5160/448-7640/448-6347/448-7915/414-7332/414-2409. Visit the website at www.newsanjosbuilders.com and www.thevictoriatorwos.com. Model units are available for viewing daily.



THE TOP BRASS OF 3D NETWORKS PTE LTD

3D Networks Pte Ltd responds to the business challenge of optimizing performance of contact centers in the Philippines through leading end-to-end systems and network integrators focusing on driving productivity through customer and employee satisfaction. 3D Networks Pte Ltd provides cutting-edge business communications solutions, thus positioning itself to meet current and future needs

in the industry and support the communications infrastructure of contact centers. In photo are Ashish Katkamwar, tech support, Turnkey Contact Center and Managed Services; Chris Luxford, CEO and director, Contact Center Practice, 3D Networks Pte Ltd (Australia); Charles Lim, regional director, 3D Networks ASEAN; and Faith Flores, country manager, 3D Networks Pte Ltd (Philippines).

ALABANG RACQUET CLUB

BADMINTON
Alabang Racquet Club in Ayala Alabang celebrated recently its 3rd Anniversary with a badminton tournament. Photo shows the husband and wife tandem of Nonoy and Sheila Ambray, Level B Mixed Doubles Champion.



Responsibility comes with power-packed Acer Consumer Desktops

UNCLE BEN, UNCLE OF FICTIONAL CHARACTER Peter Parker, the photographer alter ego of iconic legend Spider-Man, said it succinctly, "with great power comes great responsibility". It was a statement that struck to the minds of millions who have watched the blockbuster movie version of the popular comic book story.

It was not expected that the statement could be related to computers. Acer, one of the world's top computer manufacturers, probably stuck to that mantra by coming up not only with powerful computers with commanding features but also made itself responsible by making them affordable to be able to attract consumers and make its products simply irresistible.

As Acer celebrates the rebirth of its Consumer Desktop products, the company is leaving no stones unturned as it made sure the rebirth would be unprecedented by equipping its desktop products with the newest buzz word in the processor chip industry today, Intel's Core 2 Duo.

"Power can really be very tempting; you can easily put power in your products. But like in the comic book character, Acer was responsible enough to equip them not just with exceptional and outstanding features but also made it more affordable, complemented by its great aesthetics. Thus, it would be truly attractive and irresistible to our customers," declares Agnes Neria-Espino, marketing manager of acer (Philippines) Inc.

The Acer Consumer Desktop products, the Acer Aspire SA85 and the Aspire E560, all come with power-packed features with great stylish looks for the all important form factor that

promises true value for money. These products promise to be the perfect tools to empower a person's life in his quest to accomplish more and be productive in everything he does.

The Aspire SA85, for example, is considered a smart choice for desktop PC buyers who are in the lookout for ample performance, coupled with enthralling entertainment capabilities.

Powered by the revolutionary Intel Pentium 4 Processor 524 with 3.06GHz and 1MB L2 Cache on top of an SIS 661FX chipset, the Aspire SA85 promises to deliver exceptional performance at peak speeds never before seen in any desktop computer until now. It has a 256MB DDR2 with 400MHz memory module and an Integrated SIS Mirage Video Graphics 16MB VRAM shared memory with an embedded AC'97 Realtek ALC 655 CODEC with 5.1-channel surround audio support for guaranteed viewing and listening pleasure whether at work or at play.

Video output is also enhanced by the Acer 17-inch flat screen silver CRT monitor whether viewing documents or watching digital video using the Acer Aspire SA85's 16x Dual Layer DVD. Plus, storing tons of images and music can never be a problem with its humongous 80GB SATAII hard disk drive. Connectivity is also no problem since it is gigabit Ethernet and Wake-on-LAN ready, while expansion is easy with its 3 PCI ver. 2.3 slots and one AGP 8x slot, thus making the SA85 truly a smart choice for today's demanding consumer and IT professional.

The same goes for the Acer Aspire E560, which is available in two versions. One is powered by the Intel Pentium D Processor 820 supporting Dual Core Processing with 2.8GHz and

2 MB L2 caches, coupled with an ATI Radeon Express 1100 chipset for that supreme performance you've been looking for in a consumer desktop. The other is powered by the revolutionary Intel Core 2 Duo Processor E6300 (1.86GHz, 2MB L2Cache, 1066MHz FSB) and also comes with an ATI Radeon Express 1100 chipset for that guaranteed ultimate performance in your PC whether working or simply chilling out with the family.

Memory-wise, the Acer Aspire E560 comes with either a 512MB DDR2 533MHz or a 1GB DDR2 667MHz memory module, or an 80GB or 160GB SATA II 7200rpm hard drive. Both have integrated ATI Radeon X300-based graphics card and an embedded high-definition audio with a spectacular 7.1-channel surround sound support. Coupled with either a 17-inch flat-screen CRT or 19-inch WideScreen LCD monitor and 16X SuperMulti Dual Layer DVD drives, viewing your favorite movies or playing graphics-intensive games that practically comes alive on your Acer Aspire E560 is truly a viewing and listening delight.

With these outstanding features, the Acer Aspire SA85 and the Aspire E560 consumer desktops will soon become standard fixtures in every home today.

The revitalized and retooled Acer Aspire SA85 and the new Acer Aspire E560 consumer desktops with Intel Dual Core and Core 2 Duo processors are now available at authorized Acer retailers in the Philippines today. Visit a store now and see for yourself what kind of power and responsibility Acer has brought to their new-generation of quality, innovative products.

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(Alabang, Commonwealth)

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industry

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Village, Makati City
(02)756-7188

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FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

Christian Children's Fund Philippines, a branch of the international non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian child development agency, is currently looking for development professionals to be part of its team.

AREA FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
for its Area Office in Infanta, Quezon

Job Description:

The Area Finance and Administrative Officer will be responsible for the financial reporting, general accounting policies and procedures, budgets, financial analyses, audits and legal, personnel and administrative functions in the Area Office in Infanta, Quezon.

Qualifications:

- At least three years work experience in auditing, accounting/bookkeeping activities, budget preparation and office administration in an NGO
- Demonstrated experience in communication, administrative support, planning strategies and human relations skills
- Demonstrated ability to provide effective secretariat services to policy and project implementation
- Computer literate; knowledge and skills in accounting computer software an advantage
- Competent in accounting principles and procedures and office administration
- Excellent decision making, communication, supervisory, coordination, problem solving and judgment skills
- Must be willing to be posted in Infanta, Quezon and to travel to project areas

GRANTS ACCOUNTANT

for its Sustainable Health Improvements through Empowerment and Local Development (SHIELD) Project At the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

Job Description:

The Grants Accountant shall be responsible for setting up, maintaining general accounting systems, procedures and controls and ensuring the reliability and timeliness of accounting records, financial statements, donor requirements and reports on grants.

Qualifications:

- University degree in Bachelor of Science in Accountancy
- At least two years experience as a development professional
- Familiarity with Foreign Donor Requirements is a distinct advantage
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Can work with minimal supervision and perform effectively under pressure
- Willingness to travel to project areas is a must

Interested applicants may send their application letter addressing the position criteria outlined here together with detailed Curriculum Vitae with 3 references and contact details to ccfno@ccfphilippines.org.ph not later than December 21, 2006. Applications can also be posted to CCF Philippines, 8th Floor, Strata 100 Building, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Due to the volume of applications we receive, we shall only contact short listed applicants.

ROHM

ROHM ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES, INC.

Here's our final call for a year-end Job Search & Urgent Placement of Top Caliber young graduates & professionals! The most prestigious, fast growing & highly stable semiconductor-electronics Japanese multinational firm in Carmona, Cavite invites applicants for

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT TRAINEES (20)

The Person:

- Graduate in any of the following Engineering fields: BSME, BSECE, BSEE, BSCE, BSIE, BSCE from Batch 2003 ~ 2006 only;
- Preferably, with license (on applicable areas) or must have a minimum of 2 years relevant work experience from a manufacturing environment;
- New Graduates are also invited, absolutely without failing grades, and
- Graduates with special scholarships or academic awards are welcome.

The Job:

- Requires leadership function in Manufacturing area handling a group of 50 ~ 100 Production Operators (mostly male);
- Control & monitoring of production output, quality issues & progress;
- Coordination with various support groups & connecting processes, and
- Enhancement of management effectiveness in the manufacturing line.

The Requirement:

This is an entry level position for Management job in the company. The ideal candidates must have hands-on experience in leading people with proven positive traits in pursuing attainment of targets and maintaining high motivation of people. Those who qualify shall be required to start work immediately. Definitely, requires strong-willed persons, with high sense of responsibility & adaptability, very pleasant personality, stands 5'4" in height with good eye vision & excellent health condition.

Interested candidates are requested to apply in person in
Metropolis Mall
4th Level, Function Rm. A (Beside Pool Area)
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

December 19, 2006 (Tuesday) - Screening & Assessment for Exam
December 20, 2006 (Wednesday) - Examination & Interview

Receiving of applicants will be from 9:00am - 4:00pm, bring your latest resume with photo and Transcript of Records (or photocopy of grades).

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- Initiate & recommend upgrade of application & network systems based on the growing needs of the company.
- Handle the development and maintenance of Business Continuity Plan / Disaster Recovery Plan.
- Assess & identify emerging technologies that can be introduced within the company.

Qualifications:

- BS Computer Science or other IT-related course with background in Business Administration or similar field.
- Minimum eight (8) years experience with increasing responsibility in directing IT functions for small to mid-sized technology companies. At least 3 years in managing & leading teams involved in networking, software development and project management.
- Experienced in managing ERP applications and database administration.
- Knowledgeable in any or a combination of the following:
 - SAP R/3
 - Lotus Notes Domino
 - Windows 2000 / 2003 / XP
 - Oracle / MS-SQL
 - Other programming languages such as Visual Basic, Microsoft .NET, Visual Foxpro and HTML

Please submit resume with photo & contact details to:

PO Box # 483

Greenhills, San Juan Post Office

Only short-listed applicants will be contacted.

Product Manager

Will be assigned to:

- Formulate, implement & monitor business plans for pushing assigned products.
- Strengthen and develop vendor-relations.
- Manage assigned products' pricing, inventory, revenues, and evaluation.

Qualifications:

- With 2-3 years proven experience in product management, preferably in an IT company;
- Bachelor's Degree in Business Management or in any computer related course;
- Not more than 30 years old.

Corporate Sales
Executives & Supervisors

Will be assigned to:

- Prospect, develop and explore new business opportunities with the goal of meeting or even exceeding sales targets.
- Maintain and expand the organization's business relationships with existing corporate accounts.
- For Sales Supervisors: manage & grow the sales team.

Qualifications:

- A graduate of a Business or computer-related course;
- For Sales Executives: minimum 1 year experience in Corporate Sales, preferably for IT products; female & not above 30 years old;
- For Sales Supervisors: 5 yrs experience in sales & in handling people; not more than 40 years old.

Technical Support
Engineers

Will be assigned to:

- Provide on-site diagnostic, isolation and assessment of technical problems for clients.
- Conduct troubleshooting and preventive maintenance.

Qualifications:

- With at least 1 year experience in technical support, preferably in an IT company;
- With a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering or any related course;
- Technical certifications from Compaq, HP, Dell or Microsoft an advantage.

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

HINGE INQUIRER PUBLICATIONS, a dynamic company engaged in the publication of the most influential niche magazines today, is in immediate need of the following:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The Account Executive will have a primary responsibility of acquiring advertising placements for assigned Hinge Inquirer Publication magazines.

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 - Development of proposals
 - Negotiation/Closing
- Account Management
- Participation in marketing initiatives/events

REQUIREMENTS:

- Male/Female, 21 to 30 yrs old
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Business Studies/Advertising/Management, Sales & Marketing, or equivalent
- Highly motivated, a team player, with good communication, negotiation and presentation skills, thrives under pressure and can work with minimal supervision
- Applicants must be willing to work in Makati City and do field work
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Corporate Sales/Advertising/Publication

Interested AE applicants can email their resumes to aagboyant@hip.ph or mismyth@hip.ph

SALES MANAGER

The Sales Manager will be directly responsible in monitoring and developing sales and business strategies. He/she is also responsible in managing account executives and in meeting sales team objectives.

- Develop effective advertising and events packages
- Present events concepts to key accounts
- Maintain good business relations with key accounts
- Monitor performance of Account Executives/AEs
- Conduct coaching and facilitate training sessions with AEs
- Prospect new local and international business opportunities
- Ensure Sales Quota of the team is achieved

REQUIREMENTS:

- Graduate of Marketing, Advertising or any business course
- At least 3 years Management/Sales experience
- Articulate and possess exceptional presentation skills
- Computer literate
- Strong leadership and business sense to train and manage a sales team
- Creative in formulating sales strategies
- Aggressive in achieving sales targets
- Pleasing personality

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

The Editorial Assistant will be responsible in helping the Editor-in-Chief and the editorial team in accomplishing all requirements of the assigned magazine. He/she will be working closely with the Editorial Supervisor and Editorial Manager for apt tasks.

REQUIREMENTS:

- between 19-23 years old
- a graduate of a 4-year Communications course (or related degree), from UP, UST, Ateneo, La Salle or UA&P
- equipped with exceptional communication skills in both written and spoken English and Filipino
- organized, resourceful, and creative
- able to work under minimal supervision, and individually or with a group
- willing to work overtime

GRAPHIC ARTIST

The Graphic Artist will have the responsibility of conceptualizing designs for his/her respective magazine title/departments. He/she will be working closely with the Editorial Staff and Creative Director.

REQUIREMENTS:

- between 19-30 years old
- a graduate of a 4-year Communications course (or related degree), from UP, UST, Ateneo, La Salle or UA&P
- equipped with exceptional designing skills
- organized, resourceful, and creative
- able to work under minimal supervision, and individually or with a group
- willing to work overtime
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Magazine/Collateral Design

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PUBLICATIONS

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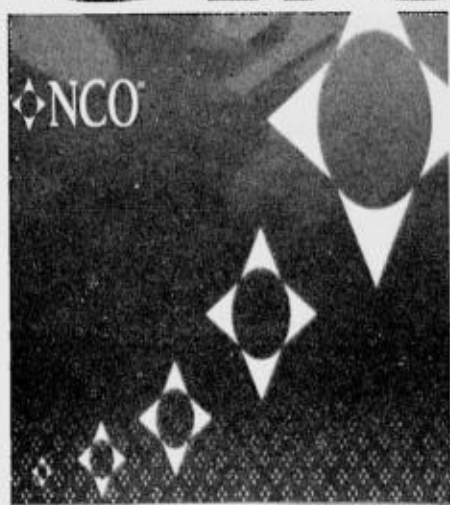
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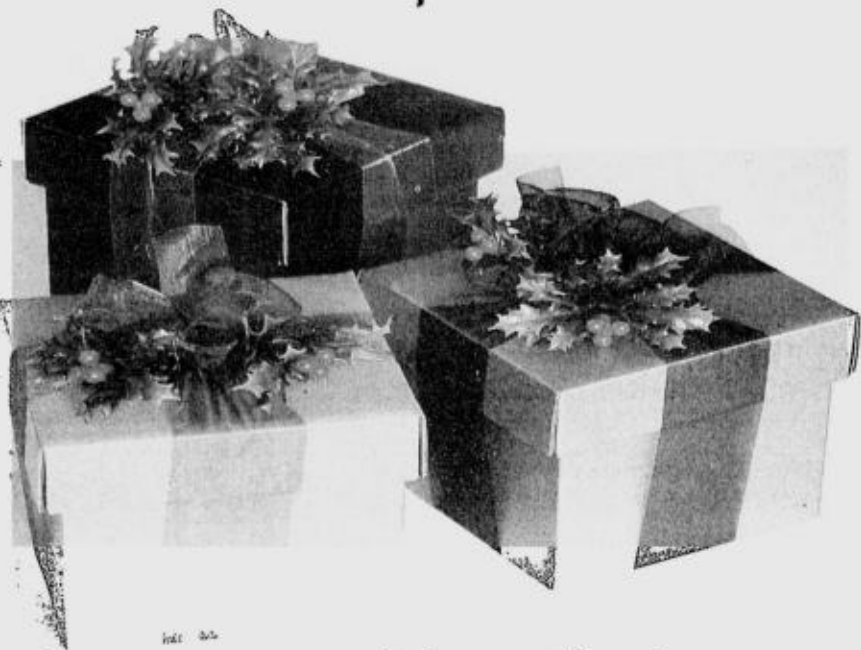
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The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is seeking for talented Filipino nationals to work at its headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna. Supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), IRRI is a nonprofit, publicly funded organization engaged in the research and development of rice-related technologies for poor farmers.

The Director General's Office invites applicants for the position:

Quality Assurance Senior Manager – (2006-R-68)

Basic Purpose:

The QASM is accountable to the Director General and will be principally responsible for the establishment and operation of IRRI quality strategy and quality management system, and monitoring/assessing compliance with standard operating procedures. The position will serve as Quality Advisor to organizational units (OUs) who will provide guidance and/or be consulted on strategic quality directions based on scientific information, methodical processes and procedures, and efficient resource management. The position will also interface with senior management and executive levels for continuing process and output improvement, including the provision of secretariat support to the IRRI Quality Assurance Committee.

Qualification Requirements:

Advanced degree preferably in Agriculture, Management/ Industrial Engineering, QA discipline or related field; at least 7 years in Quality management role in laboratory and/or field research in agricultural sciences or in a scientific organization; working knowledge on Total Quality Management, and Productivity/Quality Improvement Programs/Tools; familiarity with ISO standards; excellent oral and written English communication skills; ability to work with cross functional teams; proficient in computer operation; excellent managerial leadership ability; strong analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving skills; demonstrated excellence in both technical and administrative duties; with proven honesty and high level of integrity, self-starter and can work independently without supervision, sensitivity to multi-cultural environment; attentive to details, able to build/maintain strong interpersonal relations

Applications: Qualified candidates can submit letter of application, comprehensive resume, transcript of records, name and contact details of 3 referees to Myrna Benilda C. Pablo at the HRS-NS Office, FF Hill Building, IRRI Los Baños, Laguna or email to M.Pablo@cgiar.org. They can also mail application with complete requirements to:

Quality Assurance Senior Manager (2006-P-68)
Human Resources Services – National Staff
International Rice Research Institute
DAPO Box 7777 Metro Manila

* Screening will start on 08 January 2007 and shall continue until a suitable candidate is identified

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International
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World Bank Group

The International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank, has established a technical assistance program for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Philippines (PEP Philippines). PEP Philippines, with contributions from other bilateral and multi-lateral donors, has offices in Manila and Davao, Mindanao. The program has a mandate to provide technical assistance to support the development of small and medium enterprises, particularly in Mindanao, initially in three key areas: access to finance, agribusiness linkages and business enabling environment.

PEP Philippines is currently seeking for Consultants for the Philippine Seaweed/Carrageenan Value Chain Study.

Scope of the job: Stage 1: Desk review - The consultants will review existing literatures, studies, trade data on global and Philippine seaweed/carrageenan value chain. And develop a work plan for field work/interviews/FGDs with industry players. The work plan should include indicators which will be used to come up with analysis that comply with the objectives. It is understood that entry into plants or meeting with entrepreneurs may be difficult, the successful consultant will need to indicate how they will approach this aspect of the study to ensure the quality of information they receive.

The consultants will prepare a FGD guide and survey questionnaire that will be used to collect information from primary sources for approval by IFC-PENSA/ PEP Philippines.

Stage 2: Field work: Industry Interviews, Survey and FGDs. Arrange meetings and FGDs. Conduct interviews, survey and FGDs among key players and informants.

Stage 3: Data/Information Processing & Report Writing

Stage 4: Presentation of Findings to IFC & GTZ Coordinating Body

Stage 5: Conduct of "Industry Forum" to unite key players on the value-chain framework, and agree on mechanism to implement the value-chain initiative.

Qualifications and Position Requirements:

1. Previous work on value chains analysis required;
2. Knowledge of and contacts in the seaweed/carrageenan industry an advantage;
3. Fluency in English and local languages in Southern Philippines.
4. Previous experience with IFC technical assistance facilities preferred.
5. Proposed consultancy rate will be considered.

Interested parties would be assessed against the following criteria each weighted by relative level of importance;

• Technical Expertise	(50%)
• Knowledge of the Industry/Market	(20%)
• Price	(30%)

All submission of interest should be sent in electronic format to Agnes G. Luz (ALuz@ifc.org) and Mary Jean Roxas (Mary.Roxas@gtz.de) not later than the close of business hours on January 5, 2007. All proposals will be treated with strictest confidence. For corporate information, please visit www.ifc.org. You may email Agnes Luz for complete terms of reference.

Only email submissions will be considered.



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PEP Philippines is currently seeking Business Development Service Providers for the Establishment of Farmer-based Seaweed Nursery Enterprises

Scope of the job: The BDS provider will manage the establishment of nurseries in Zamboanga City, and conceptualize and implement a scheme to legally and operationally transform pre-identified farmer organizations into enterprises that could operate the seaweed nurseries in a sustainable manner. One week after signing the contract, the BDS provider will present an inception report detailing project activities to be carried out within the timeframe of 120 days, working within a total contract budget of no more than US\$50,000. The IFC Seaplant Network Philippines team shall provide technical (agronomic) expertise, oversee and approve all activities including selection of farmer-groups and procurement of materials necessary for the successful conduct of the project.

The BDS provider is expected to deliver/provide the following:

- a. Inception report
- b. Three nurseries in three locations within Zamboanga City, each nursery with 15 rafts;
- c. Three enterprises legally registered as business entities;
- d. Working capital needed to operate the seaweed nursery operations;
- e. Capacity-building Needs Assessment of recipient farmer-groups
- f. A viable scheme to professionally set up, operate, capacitate, and transfer the management of nurseries to the farmer-based enterprises that includes:
 - i. buy-in strategies for target groups including appropriate financial management scheme to include common industry fund build up;
 - ii. training and institutional mechanisms necessary to ensure the development of the capacity of the organization to manage the business in a sustainable way;
- g. Final report of activity which should also include: training materials used, lessons learned from activity and further recommendations for strengthening the nursery enterprises.

Qualification Requirements:

1. Proven competency in providing business development service for farmer groups in Mindanao;
2. Past experience with seaweed farmers or fisher folk
3. Must show financial capacity to undertake activity;
4. Past experience in provision or facilitation of access to micro-financing services to farmers/fisher folk is an advantage.
5. Knowledge of and contacts in the seaweed/carrageenan industry an advantage;
6. Fluency in English and local languages in Southern Philippines.
7. Has complied with World Bank vendor eligibility requirements

Interested parties would be assessed against the following criteria each weighted by relative level of importance;

• Technical Expertise	(70%)
• Price	(30%)

All submission of interest should be sent in electronic format to Agnes G. Luz (ALuz@ifc.org) with copy to Karina Vinluan (KVinluan@ifc.org) not later than the close of business hours on January 5, 2007. All proposals will be treated with strictest confidence. For corporate information, please visit www.ifc.org. You may email Agnes G. Luz for complete terms of reference.

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■ Reporting Analysts

Job summary

- Supports strategic and tactical marketing and business issues for global clients
- Provides analytical support on operational and program structure issues for marketing programs
- Provides analysis and reporting for ongoing and adhoc projects
- Assists in compiling lists of email and direct mail recipients based on statistical models built by senior consultants using SAS querying tool

Requirements

- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics or related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS and SQL
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must be able to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

■ Business Objects/SAS Analysts

Job summary

- Performs periodic updates on Business Objects Web Intelligence data
- Delivers regular Dashboard reports and Business Objects ad-hoc queries
- Provides analytical support on data issue researches

Requirements

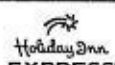
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics, Computer Science or any related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS, SQL and Business Objects
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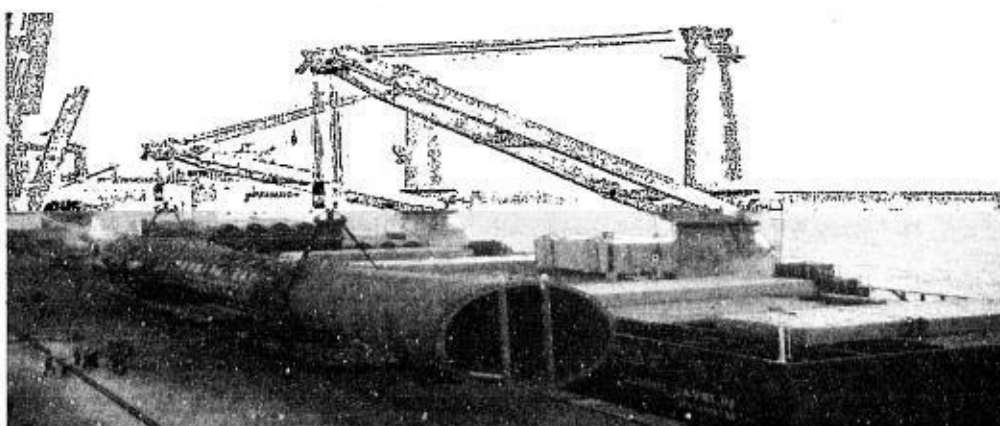
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Do you have a whole-brain organization?

By Prof. Cecile B. Manikan
Contributor

(Part 1)

EXTENSIVE RESEARCH IN THE HUMAN brain explain why people behave the way they do. Neuroscience with the aid of sophisticated machines have tracked down various mental processes to particular areas in the brain so that by monitoring brain activity through MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scientists are able to literally read their patient's mind and reasonably predict the moods and feelings associated with such mental activity.

Results of these experiments have yielded much useful information on how people generally prefer to use their brains resulting to patterns of behavior that would explain certain interests in particular fields and the resultant differences in communication, teaching and learning styles. Repeated use of a preferred mental mode becomes habitual, making this area of the brain better developed than the

other parts. The best metaphor here is a preference for right-handedness or left-handedness. Both are available, but generally, each one develops a preference for one over the other.

Prof. Roger Sperry of Harvard University got a Nobel Prize in 1982 for his Split-Brain Theory—the left brain-right brain classification of the hemispheres of the brain that basically categorized people as logical/mathematical (left-brained) or creative/intuitive (right-brained). In education parlance the measurement of the former is generally referred to as IQ (Intelligence quotient) and the latter is what is now known as IQ2.

An earlier theory by Paul MacLean on the Triune Brain traced the evolutionary and adaptive capacity of the brain to grow and develop as man's survival needs changed with his environment. Thus, the brain as we have it now consists of three layers—the brain stem representing the survival Instinctive or Reptilian brain of our Stone Age forefathers, the emotional Mammalian or Limbic System that enabled

nurturing of the young and preservation of the species that developed in the hunter-gatherer stage, and the problem-solving Thinking brain or Neo-Cortex of modern man.

Ned Hermann, a physicist at General Electric built on the Triune Brain and Split Brain theories and through experiments of his own came up with the Ned Hermann Brain Dominance Inventory (HBDI). Hermann's four-quadrant model divides the brain into the upper and lower parts (neo-cortex and limbic system) and left to right representing the two hemispheres (See the quadrants and their specific mental functions below.)

In summary, the four quadrants represent all the mental processes of the brain. Known as the Whole-Brain concept, we have the logical-mathematical A, the linear, step-by-step B, the feeling-emotional C, and the holistic, big-picture D. Whole-brain thinking connotes a total systemic approach to problem-solving and decision-making. Applied to management and organizational processes, problem analysis takes into account the logic of the situation (A), the facts surrounding it (B), relationships affected (C), and the trends and patterns of the big picture or total impact (D).

Applied to learning environments, the brain dominance theory lends itself to a student's favorite subjects in school: A—arithmetic, logic, finance, science and technology; B—accounting, programming, production and technical management; C—social sciences, psychology, people management, performing arts and high-skilled sports; D—visual arts, geometry, design, architecture, marketing and advertising.

Similarly, preferred professions follow the logic of brain dominance. A quadrant thinkers will most likely become lawyers, engineers, physicians, analysts and statisticians while the B brainers would be most comfortable in administration, accounting, programming, maintenance work, bookkeeping or any job that require linear step-by-step process (cashiers and traffic policemen). C dominants often pursue careers in counseling, public relations, HR, entertainment, performing arts, social work and healthcare while the big-pic-



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

ture D minds might be attracted to entrepreneurship, research and development, architecture, design, painting, playwriting and composition.

Unfortunately, not everyone is whole-brained. Statistically, only 3 percent of the world's population uses all four quadrants. The remaining 67 percent uses two quadrants (that explains the popularity of left-brainers and right-brainers), 23 percent—3 quadrants and 7 percent—1 quadrant.

Experiments have proven the superiority of whole brain processes over the lop-sided bias toward one, two, or three quadrants only. Effective planning and decision-making processes entail the use of all quadrants. In strategic management, for example, environmental scanning and visioning would primarily demand the big picture D brain in discerning patterns and opportunities while the analytical-logical A focuses on problem analysis and eventual organizational positioning in the market or industry. The B brain takes care of detailed plans and their corresponding requirements for resources—people, money, or physical facilities. Leading, motivating, monitoring, evaluating and rewarding perfor-

mance have to do with people where the C quadrant brain becomes essential.

It is interesting to note that the utilization of two quadrants within the same hemisphere would feel more natural (A to B, B to A in the left hemisphere or C to D, D to C in the right hemisphere) and less stressful than if one were to cross hemispheres—A/B to C or D and vice versa). Much stress is experienced if a person is asked to perform a task that does not belong to the realm of his or her own preference. This is like asking an accountant who has a dominant B brain to daydream (visioning process) or compose poetry which is a D brain activity. Or asking a dominant C performing dance artist to analyze case studies of the A quadrant. In the same way that an employee feels frustrated and unhappy if his job function is not matched with his own brain preference. Or when leadership or communication styles clash between managers and subordinates. We can just imagine the day-to-day fiasco of a detailed B manager having to deal with a D mind secretary who can aptly summarize situations but cannot locate files. This does not mean, however, that

one cannot develop whole-brain facility. Many progressive companies subject their management trainees to areas that are least preferred in order to develop skills and competencies that will round up their managerial and leadership foundation. The CEO function, by virtue of its responsibility over the entire organization requires the development and integration of all the quadrants.

The challenge, therefore, is how to achieve individual, team and organizational peak performances through whole-brain development. Enterprises and business organizations can make big strides in competitive advantage and positioning by applying this knowledge not to highlight personal differences but harnessing the giftedness of each one in creating a powerful difference.

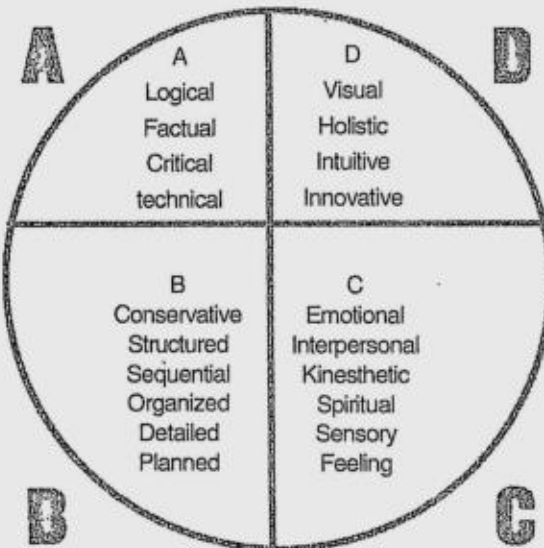
(To be concluded next week)

*Reference: The Creative Brain, Ned Hermann

(The author is a certified MBTI practitioner and teaches self-mastery, strategic management, creativity and intuition, leadership, education management, and arts management at the Asian Institute of Management. E-mail her at cmanikan@aimg.edu)

QUADRANT BRAIN THEORY*

By Ned Hermann



'My husband wants me to give up my career to become a housewife'

By Josie O. Santamaria

I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MY career, earning one promotion after the other, and presently an executive in our marketing organization. I got married at age 38 and I'm now in my late 40s. My husband and I are lucky that we were able to have four children, three of whom are studying in an expensive school, the youngest is only eight months old.

My problem is that my husband, who operates a small business, now wants me to resign to take care of our children, my youngest being sickly and our nine-year-old son getting low grades in school. How can I ever give up a successful career with a high-paying job? I'm not cut out to be a housewife. Besides, it is my salary that keeps our children in school and enables us to live a comfortable life. I'm also able to pay for a good *yaya* for my baby and for a tutor for our children. I cannot do what they can do.

We definitely cannot live on the income from his business. He wants me to help him in his business so it can grow. Being in business is very risky and I don't also see myself as an entrepreneur like him. I prefer to enjoy financial security in a corporate career.

Ms Career Wife

It's true what you wrote that with hard work and the use of your skills and talents, you are quite assured of keeping your corporate job, attain career success, and enjoying increased income. You are averse to being a housewife and to helping your husband grow his small business because this will not provide you the high income you've gotten used to and maintain the comfortable lifestyle you and your family enjoy.

ASK YOUR
CAREER
COUNSELORJosie O.
Santamaria

What are the unpleasant (I don't want to use the word "negative") consequences of remaining in your corporate job? I can think of at least two. One, your husband will feel disappointed that you are not willing to sacrifice your personal needs (money, status, recognition, etc.) to help him, when he is obviously calling on you to use your talents, skills and experience to help him grow his business. How is this affecting your relationship? Two, you said your eight-month baby is sickly but is taken care of by a good *yaya* and your husband obviously believes your baby needs a mother's loving care to become healthy. Can a *yaya*, no matter how efficient, provide this? Can you live with a guilty conscience?

I always believe that one cannot have everything. A parent has to sacrifice many things for the happiness and well-being of the family. I hate to sound as though I'm preaching. However, you need to clarify your values and priorities in life. You have at least three major roles: wife, mother and company executive. Quite often, your needs in each of these roles conflict. When these happen, only you can make decisions based on your priorities. You decrease your confusion if your values are clear to you, and are guided by them.

Another thing you need to do is to confront at least three mindsets you have: that you are not cut out to be a housewife, that you cannot live on the income from the business of

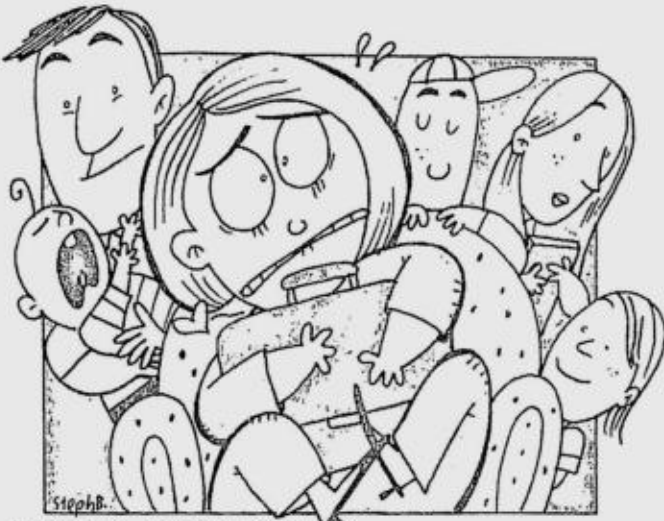


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAYO

your husband, that you don't see yourself as an entrepreneur.

The fact that you have helped your company grow its business through the use of your talents and skills shows that you have what it takes to become an entrepreneur: self-confidence, goal- and achievement-oriented, opportunity-seeking, persistence, drive to succeed and to excel, persuasive, networking ability, responsible, creative, high energy level, etc. These are critical skills to grow a business. If you and your husband are united in mind and heart, and you synergize your skills and talents, what you now see as a small business will grow just like many successful family corporations that started small and became big from the joint efforts of husband and wife.

My research on husband-and-wife teams in business was included in my book, "Managing Work & Career," which was published by New Day Publishers and available in bookstores.

I don't know whoever invented the demeaning term "plain housewife" to refer to a wife and mother, who uses her talents and skills to take

care of her growing children, attends to the needs of her husband, and keeps a home where her family feels happy to go to, and in the process feels fulfilled and joyful.

Yes, I'd been a career woman, wife and mother, just like you. However, if I can live my life all over again, I would have spent more time observing my children at home and at play, to discover their God-given talents and researching on how I could have brought out these talents. I could have spent time talking to their teachers and participating in school activities to enhance home-school partnership. Regrets, sad to say, are always at the end. Someone once wrote: No one in his old age and at death's door ever says "I wish I had spent more time at work." It's always "I wish I had spent more time with my family."

May God help you see your way clearly in your situation and make a decision that you are happy and at peace with.

(The author is president of Career Systems Inc., a management consulting and training company as well as a professional psychologist, counselor and coach, and mentor.)

Gospel Lk. 3:10-18

"Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise."

Sharing oneself

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

ONE PLEASANT SIGHT TO BEHOLD IS PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER and sharing the load of a work at hand. The picture of the *bayanitan*—several persons lifting a *bahay kubo* on their shoulders and happily transferring it to another barrio—would always get attention and admiration from viewers in a Filipino exhibit. But this scene of people sharing the burden seems to be vanishing in the workplace, or even in communities. Perhaps, it is because technology makes workers interact less with one another due to automation and computerization. Or perhaps, people are getting more fascinated with robots and high-tech gadgets doing the work of hundreds of workers and are becoming less appreciative of the value of a generous sharing of workload and harmonious teamwork by hundreds of people in a company.

Sharing oneself with the other is self-consuming but likewise self-fulfilling. Giving of oneself to others makes one happier than one would be when just receiving something from the others. I believe that a worker who spends all his energies in his assigned task, not minding so much the time he is paid to work as the intensity and quality of his dedication and performance at work, is much happier and feels more fulfilled than the one who grudgingly and mechanically does his job, waiting impatiently for the time of the work to end. The attitude and practice of sharing is very important for everyone in the workplace and in society. When both employers and employees are ready to share what each one has with one another, the workplace and the work itself would be heaven on earth. (E-mail the author at mfyg@skynet.net)

REFLECTIONS
FOR THE
WORKING SOUL

Giving is thanking

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

SHARING ONE'S CLOAK OR FOOD WITH THE NEEDY, AS ADVISED IN today's Gospel story, is a practice that would be very relevant at work. For one, we can always admit our limitations and ask a more knowledgeable colleague to help us solve a particular problem bugging us in our work. It's also nice to see a workplace where people share not only one another's workload but also goodies—their *baon*, for example, so that lunchbreak becomes like a delightful pot luck party. Personal problems are also shared between or among coworkers who have become friends and not just professional colleagues over the years. Such workplaces have an atmosphere of neighborliness about them and it cannot be denied that they may be more conducive to work than the usual let's-keep-it-professional environment. When coworkers, besides extending professional support to one another also offer empathy, people tend to have fewer anxieties that distract them from work, knowing they are understood, accepted as they are, and can find help when needed.

But human nature being what it is, it is not very easy to keep the balance once otherwise mere coworkers begin to be privy to intimate details of one another's lives. If one is not careful, sharing between coworker-friends easily turns into sharing the burden of secrecy. For instance, when one discovers that her coworker-friend who keeps the company's purse strings has been dipping into the company's funds for her personal use, and is asked to "keep it between us," the former is caught in a tug of war between her conscience and her loyalty as a friend.

To keep sharing with coworkers healthy, it's prudent to set your sight on a goal that's bigger than either of you. Give—not so that you can take in return—but because giving is expressing your gratitude for having received from the Great Giver of All. (E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)



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Self-Driven and Ambitious ☐ YES ☐ NO
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I have: **Excellent English-speaking Skills** ☐ YES ☐ NO
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- 2) Hold the regular meeting of the operations coordinating group
- 3) Oversee and provide assistance to POs in partnership management (i.e. joint planning, appraising partner proposals and reports, regular partner visits and monitoring, feedback with partners, assessment of capacity building needs of partners)
- 4) Support to Teams in their networking with the relevant I/NGOs and government agencies
- 5) Work and collaborate directly with POs to finalize and conduct regular reviews of project milestones and monthly action plans
- 6) Work with POs, PSO and Logistics Officer, to draft the comprehensive monitoring and narrative project reports in keeping with agreed Donor and Oxfam deadlines.
- 7) Draft and finalize business communications and official response to inquiries, making sure these are sent properly
- 8) Together with the Management Committee, participate in programme reviews, planning and decision making

Key Competencies

- Good grasp of the project management cycle
- Good writing and presentation skills
- Knowledge of Philippine development dynamics and good understanding of the Mindanao context and its development needs
- Ability to work comfortably in either humanitarian or development mode
- Familiarity with gender concerns, and commitment to gender equality
- Satisfactory numeracy skills, and practical experience in transaction processing
- Attention to detail, order, method completion and results
- Flexible and ability to prioritize workload, to take initiative, work independently and meet deadlines
- Good interpersonal and communication skills, the ability to relate to people of all backgrounds and the ability to work as part of a team
- Strong customer and client service orientation
- Knowledge and experience of efficient internal office communication, including an efficient filing system
- Good computer skills (Windows, Word, Excel, PPT, Internet and email)
- Ability to work under pressure, and prioritize routine and adhoc tasks
- Conversant in English and Tagalog (proficiency in one more Mindanao dialect is an advantage)
- Commitment to Oxfam's culture and objectives.

This is a fixed term assignment until 31 October 2008. Interested applicants should send their application letter and CV to:

The Human Resources and Administrative Officer**OXFAM GREAT BRITAIN**

95-A Malumanay Street

Teacher's Village, Diliman, Quezon City 1101

FAX: 927-0499 email: etadeo@oxfam.org.uk

Deadline of application: 29 DECEMBER 2006

Response will be sent to short-listed applicants only.
Interviews will be during the week of January 8th 2007.

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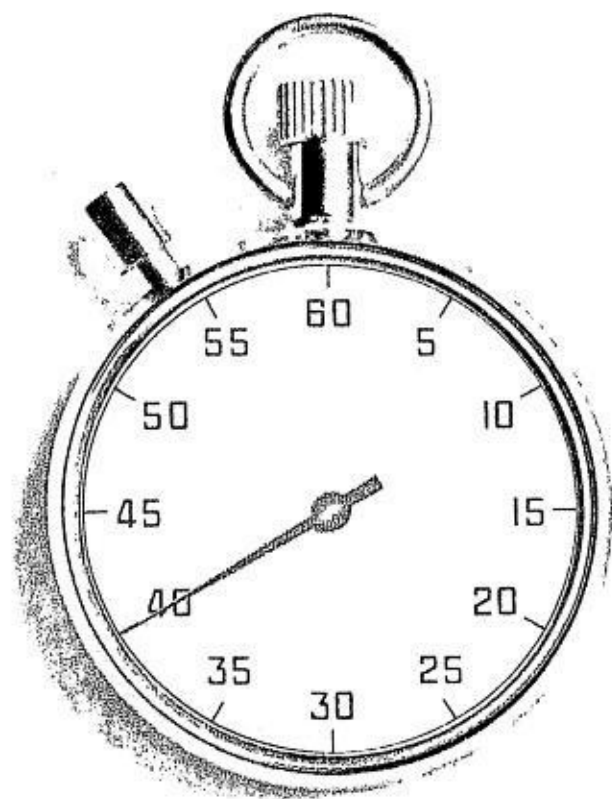
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DECEMBER 17, 2006

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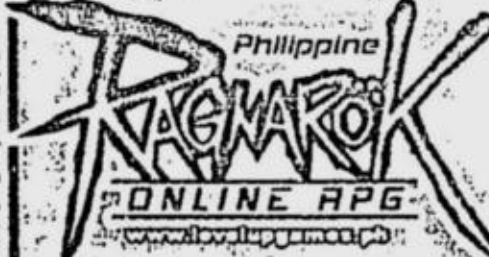
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IN THE HOPE OF "FIXING" HER, FEI AND VENDETTA LEFT ENYO AT THE REKENBER CORPORATION HEADQUARTERS, UNDER THE CARE OF PROFESSOR AZURIN.

DESPITE HER UNIQUE DESIGN, PROFESSOR AZURIN WAS ABLE TO RESTORE THE HOMUNCULUS TO WORKING CONDITION.

UNFORTUNATELY, ENYO WAS ALSO RETURNED TO HER FORMER STATE... EVIL!

**CHAPTER 07:
The Ughthalzen Unseen**

NOT ONE YEAR AGO, WHEN TZERERO WAS BEING CONTROLLED BY THE DARK LORD, HE ORDERED ENYO TO KILL ME, MY SISTER, LIU, AND RAN, PRINCE OF AMATSU.

THOUGH IT TOOK ALL THREE OF US WORKING TOGETHER, WE WERE FINALLY ABLE TO DEFEAT HER. BUT SHE DISAPPEARED.

WHEN NEXT WE SAW HER, SHE ACTED LIKE A CHILD, SIMPLE AND INNOCENT (IF A BIT SASSY).

THE VALKYRIE HAD REDEEMED HER AND SHE REMEMBERED NOTHING OF HER PAST. RAN, LIU AND I DECIDED TO KEEP IT A SECRET.

IF ENYO HAS INDEED TURNED EVIL AGAIN, SHE'S SURELY HEADED FOR AMATSU.

THAT'S THE LAST PLACE SHE'LL REMEMBER FROM HER "LONG-DELAYED MISSION".

EXCUSE ME, MA'AM-SIR.

YES, NURSE, WHAT IS IT?

YOU TOLD ME TO REPORT IF WE FOUND ANYTHING. FOUR GERMINATION BREEDS, ONE OF EACH SPECIES, ARE MISSING FROM THE HOMUNCULUS NURSERY.

WHAT WOULD ENYO WANT WITH THOSE?

WE CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES. NURSE, GET THE SAME BREEDS AND GIVE THEM TO KRISTOFFER HERE.

PROFESSOR, I...UH...I'M NOT... COMFORTABLE USING HOMUNCULI...

YES, I KNOW. IN ALL MY YEARS OF TEACHING BIOETHICS, YOU GOT THE LOWEST SCORE. THAT'S WHY YOU'LL NEED...

THIS!

WHAT IS IT?

TO BE CONTINUED.

PUGAD BABOY

BY POL MEDINA JR.

GISING NA SWEET HAM

MAHUHULI NA TAYO SA SIMBANG GABI.

ANO BA'NG GAGAWIN KO DITO SA AMO MO?

HINDI KO MAGISING EH.

E DI TAYO NA LANG ANG MAGSIMBA.

'DALA TAYO NG MARAMING BARYA.

PARA SA OFFERTORY?

PARA SA MGA BINEBENTA SA TABI NG SIMBAHAN!

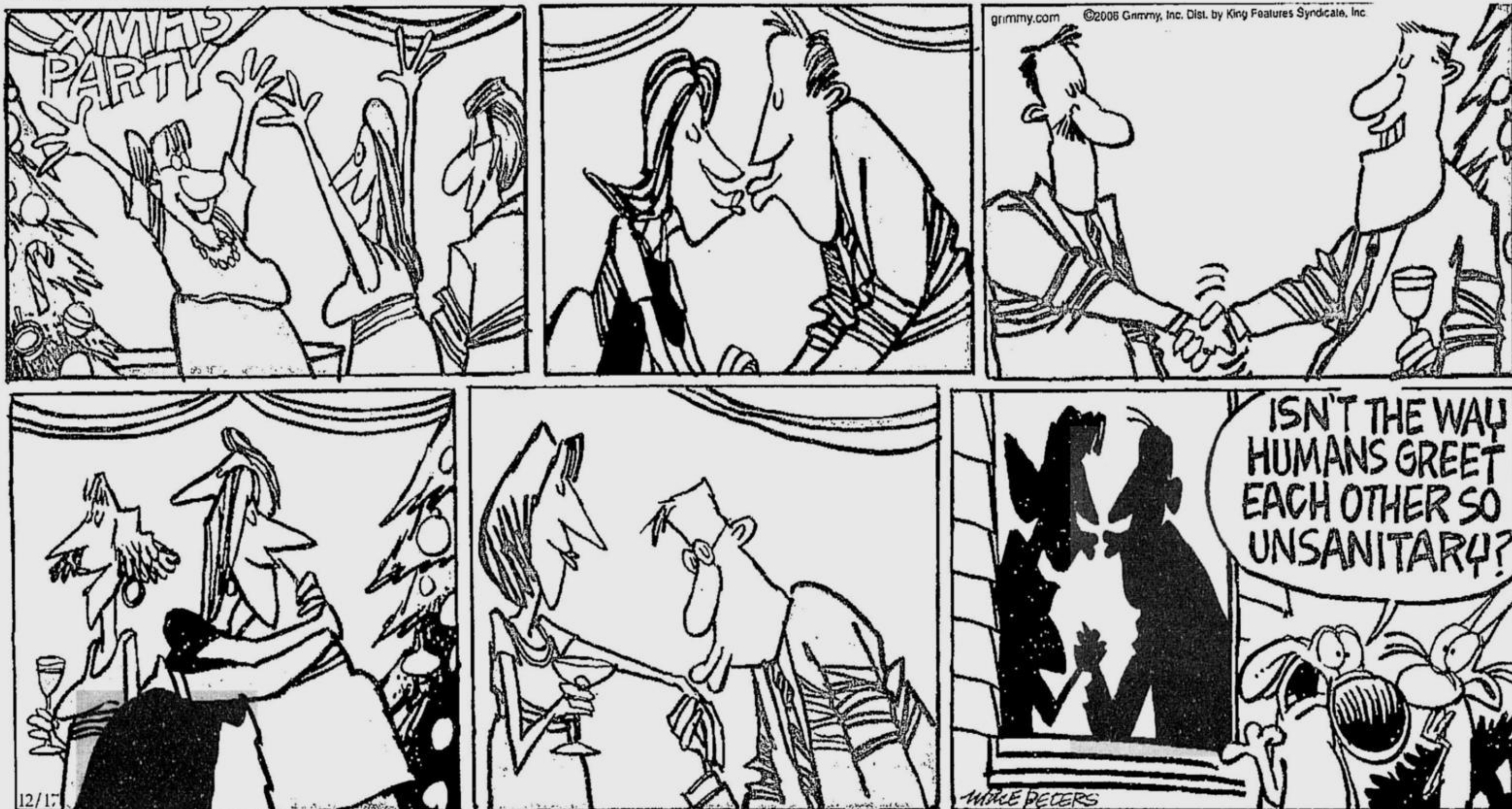
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To be continued...



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words by CYAN ABAD-JUGO
art by MAISA DELURIA

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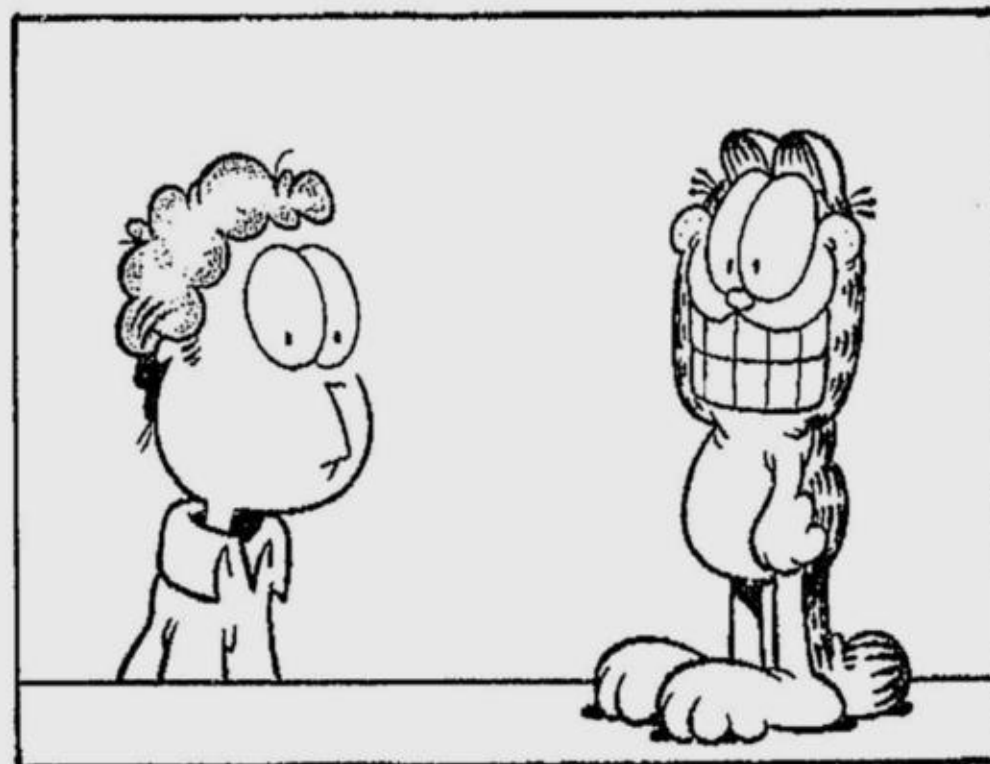
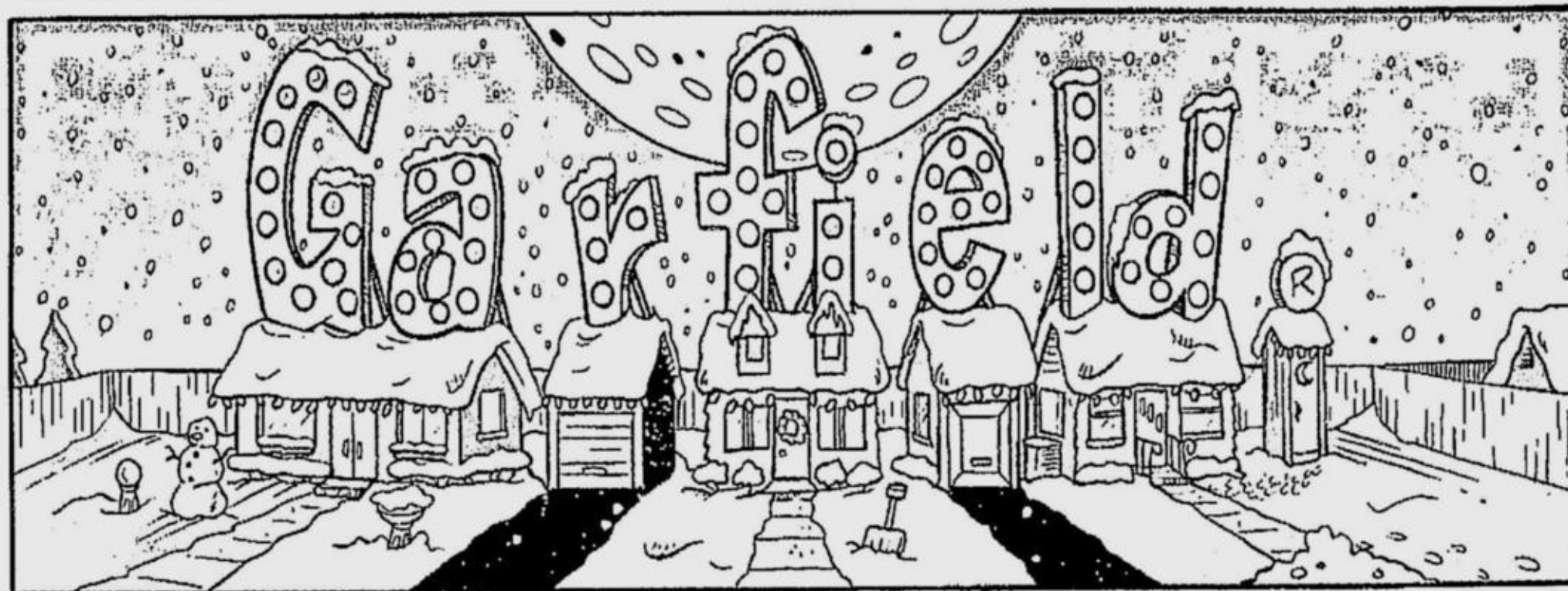
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sunday INQUIRER *magazine*

December 17, 2006

AGUA boy

Enchong Dee, Philippine swimming hopeful, floats above the rest with his world-class stroke

PLUS:

Toni Leviste, super equestrienne • Al Jazeera's girl in Manila • Rockstедdy's righteous rocker • 5 ways to keep your marriage good • and more...

By Agnes Prieto

Saving The Filipino Marriage

He may be a priest with no nuclear family of his own, but it has been Fr. Ruben Tanseco's mission to keep love alive in every Filipino family, starting with the parents

August de la Cruz



HIS vocation may have put him on the solo path through life, but Fr. Ruben Tanseco SJ has, through the family ministries he has established, saved thousands of troubled Filipino marriages, helped stabilize families, and prepared many couples for this life-long commitment.

His focus on families springs from his own happy childhood. "My father had no other preoccupation except his family and his work. His faithfulness to my mother was absolute, and while he was a very good-looking man, there was not a hint of scandal. 'To love and to work,' as Sigmund Freud put it, that was his life. This is what inspired me to devote my life work to enhancing family life."

His 53 years as a Jesuit have been dedicated to helping build strong families "because they are the transmitters of values." Trained in special studies in family ministry

abroad, he came back and initially teamed up with couples in the Christian Family Movement, after which they moved on to establish Marriage Encounters (ME), a renewal weekend for husbands and wives. "The pioneering work has been adapted to our Filipino culture; the weekend encounters have follow-up programs. For instance, Tipanan is the ME course for underprivileged families, and it is in Tagalog. We have trained hundreds of facilitators to work on these all over the country." The ME Foundation has now become a byword for many a Filipino couple looking for a way to deepen or work out a challenging partnership.

Fr. Tanseco saw the need to prepare couples for the life task ahead, and set up Discovery Weekends for young adults getting ready for marriage. While professionals take years to prepare for their careers, no formal training is given for the most important work of bringing other human beings into the life stream. During the weekend, engaged couples, with the help of trained facilitators, assess their compatibility and readiness for the lifelong commitment of living together and raising a family.

The Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM), now an institution in marital and family counselling, was set up to help troubled marriages. Counselling courses were begun by Fr. Tanseco among priests and seminarians, and eventually included couples themselves who wanted to help other families. CEFAM is now 25, and what started as a pioneering effort now provides marital and family counsellors not only for the Philippines but for the Asean region. A growing number of

enrolees come from China, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam, and they come for either the diploma course or a Master's degree in Family Ministry. And it's not only Catholic priests and nuns who are interested; Protestant pastors, Muslims, Buddhists—the approach is interfaith, and this stems from Fr. Tanseco's staunch teaching on Creation Spirituality, which goes beyond institutional religion, acknowledging that there is only one Creator who fathers all faiths. The importance of strengthening families cannot be underestimated. They provide the core of any society; they can make or unmake a nation. "Edsa I was a moving experience for me, an expression of nationalism, of patriotism," Fr. Tanseco recalls. "Sadly, centuries of colonialization have watered down our love for country. This is why I set up CPPJ—Christian Parenting for Peace and Justice—among interested couples." From a self-centered perspective, families are taught to go beyond the me-first attitude, and to see themselves as stewards of the resources entrusted to them. Pioneer couples have established businesses and positioned themselves in government in order to give life to this idea, although it has not taken off like other programs. Fr. Tanseco hopes to bring about "Christian socialism" where the common good is everyone's concern.

"Authentic love plus authentic justice equals peace" is this soft-spoken priest's message to Filipino families. Indeed, it isn't just about couples anymore; true love extends to concern for others, and expands to economic, social and political good for everyone.

Marriage, According to Fr. Ruben Tanseco

1. Marriage is total commitment to the well-being and wholeness of the other. It does not say "I love you if"; instead, it says "I will love you even if."

2. Marriage does not hold back anything. The lover's love does not depend on the beloved's growing or changing; it is a commitment to love even when the beloved fails.

3. When we get married we take on a partner not just for the fulfillment of our own personal needs, but more importantly, to attain our own growth by loving another. This is growth to full personhood.

(continued on page 12)

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The New Foodie Heaven

Hop around Serendra, where a slew of gooc restaurants is waiting to be tried out

COUNT on Ayala to dictate cool and to keep upping the ante on fine dining. There was the old Greenbelt in the '80s, where Via Mare made oysters the date dish. Then they demolished Quad and built Glorietta, home to T.G.I. Friday's (still there) which introduced the concept of the refillable giant glass of iced tea. You just weren't cool if you hadn't tried their fried mozzarella. Then the millennium came and Ayala gave birth to Greenbelt 3, where fine dining stretched from Italianni's and Cena to Nuvo, and malling was given a touch of class. And now, Serendra—not just a strip but a ginormous fine dining park!

Serendra is a food park. It's Foodie Heaven. You can hop from one restaurant to another: first stop would be for your main meal, then hop on for dessert, then hop a little more for wine before heading home (unless you're like me who has wine with everything). At least that's what I do—I hop and hop til I'm fat and happy! And I was also very happy to find out that some of the restaurants here (Abe, Silk and Duo) are very conveniently open and not just calling their last orders at 10 p.m. Finally! Restaurants that follow Filipino time (or at least the workaholic's hours.)

Now that it's Christmas and it's "dinner here, dinner there, dinner everywhere" season, here's the 411 on a few of the Serendra restos I've tried.

Duo Steakhouse and Wine Bar

This restaurant is very welcoming and, not surprisingly, always full. It was hard to determine at first glance



You've got to get one of Sonja's cupcakes, above; below, inside Silk restaurant



what theme it held but upon observing the menu's *foie gras*, risotto and confit, I figured it was French. True enough, I found out later that its chef is Mauro Arjona, formerly of Le Soufflé. Prices are a little steep but not in the league of Le Soufflé or Lolo Dad's. Steaks range from P450 for the Steak Tagalog to P2,075 for the American Kobe rib eye.

But complain not of the price for Duo successfully lives up to its name of being a steakhouse. Order a steak and you will be happy with your meal. I would suggest the Steak and *Foie Gras* dish (P730). For non-meat eaters, the fish is not so bad but it is definitely only second to any of the meats. You can try the Lapu-Lapu Prosciutto in Saffron Ginger Sauce with Mushroom Risotto (P470), but make sure that each bite has all the ingredients floating in

your mouth or the flavors won't come out and you won't appreciate the dish. The mushroom changes the taste of the dish totally so don't eat the fish without it.

Thai at Silk

This is my number one recommendation among the restaurants I've tried so far. Cecille Ysmael must be given a standing ovation for her recipes. I was initially turned off because the dishes I ordered (appetizers and main course) were served at the same time, the six huge plates crammed on a puny table, but my aggravation disappeared on first taste of the Tom Yum Kung soup, a hot and sour prawn soup that is an amazing blend

By Joy Rojas

Photographs by Rudy Esperas

DRESSED in a tattered T-shirt and jeans, and sporting a red mohawk and two other colors on his hair, tiny gold braid running down the back of his head, and a goatie in its original black—Teddy Corpuz isn't your typical Christian guy. But then again, this isn't your average rock star, either. The lead singer of the alternative band Rockstеды doesn't smoke or do drugs, drinks only socially, and likes to listen to



struggling band trying to make it big, Corpuz says, "We're all the same. *Kanya-kanyang time lang siguro* (Everyone has his own time to shine). Personally, I hope that through me, people can see the amazing things Jesus Christ can do. Being in a band isn't just about sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll. It can be about glorifying God, excellence, and really trying to live a righteous life."

Righteous Brother

He may look wild and talk like the devil's at his heels, but Rockstеды lead singer Teddy Corpuz has chosen the straight and narrow path in a business rife with temptations

kundiman in his spare time.

The ultimate irony? While Corpuz and his bandmates (bassist Christian Sindico, guitarist Jowi Ramos, lead guitarist Juven Pelingon and drummer Jeff Cucullo) like to inject Christian influences in original songs like "*Gising Na*" and "*Magpakailanman*," it's "*Lagi Mo Lang Akong Dinadedma*," the single with its in-your-face spoken-word portion, that listeners like the most.

"*Nakakatuwa* (it's gratifying)," smiles Corpuz who tucks his wiry frame into a chair. "Once, while I was in a grocery, someone pointed to me and said, 'Uy, *si mahalkitaperodimolangalam...*' It's nice. I just say hi and thank you."

Corpuz, who was bald when he studied computer science at AMA Computer College and wore a moptop before the mohawk, chalks up his rebel image to self-expression. "It's just a look that I want," he shrugs. "Just because you're a Christian doesn't mean you can't express

yourself."

Being Christian likewise hasn't hindered his band from singing about everyday themes like "*dedma*" (aloofness) in a medium that is often described as the music of the devil. Though well aware of rock's dark and evil reputation, Corpuz also notes that there are Christian bands that choose to spread the Word through the genre. "Even my pastor likes rock music," he says. "We don't promote hatred, cursing or mocking; we're still about clean music. It's just a matter of integrity on our part, matching our Christian life with our walk as individuals."

Admittedly, it can be a tough walk; the wine and women can be tempting, and bands have questioned Rockstеды's participation in events like the recent Oktoberfest. But Corpuz, a member of the Victory Christian Church since 2002, has managed to stay on the straight and narrow, keeping both feet firmly on the ground. Recalling the days when they were just another

Such revelations didn't come instantly to Corpuz, the youngest of two siblings (his older sister is married and lives in Antipolo), and the son of a bakery owner and a homemaker. Growing up in Lagro, Quezon City, his first ambition was to be a hip-hop dancer. Plans changed, however, when Corpuz, who played guitar for his sister and her friends during breaks from class, joined a grunge band in junior high. "I didn't know how or when," he says, "but I knew I wanted to be a rock star."

Along with the rock star dream came the rock star lifestyle: the then teenage Corpuz drank, smoked cigarettes and did marijuana. "*Pasaway ako noon* (I was a scoundrel then)." Still, he was not a lost cause. In 1998 and before a congregation that included his mother and sister, Corpuz became a Christian and proceeded to turn his life—and music—around 180 degrees. For three years, he was the lead singer of Acoustic Faith, a three-man Christian band that enjoyed some success and

(continued on page 12)

By Tinna S. Bonifacio

The Ride of Her Life

The passion to conquer still burns in equestrienne Toni Leviste as she climbs back into the saddle for the Doha Games

Rodel Rotoni



AS this story is being written, Toni Leviste is in Doha, Qatar with the rest of the Philippine delegation, nervously awaiting the official start of the 2006 Asian Games equestrian competition.

"There is a lot of pressure. But as in any championship, I can only put myself in the best position to do well and leave the rest to God," says Toni in an interview just hours before she left on the eight-hour flight to Doha. Toni's horse, a 15-year-old Swedish warmblood named Just Jewels, had left ahead of her.

Right now, no one can say how Toni would fare in the showjumping event. But she has trained long and hard for the Asian Games and for practically every event she's joined since learning to ride a horse when she was 8. For the last six years, Toni has been based in Belgium, where she has been training with Jos Kumps, one of the best trainers in the world. Kumps trained both the current Olympic champion, Rodrigo Pessoa of Brazil and the current World Champion, Dermott Lennon of Ireland. Toni has also been touring Europe—France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Holland—for showjumping events. Belgium, she says, is the center of Europe, and Europe is "the mecca of showjumping."

Aside from an Olympic medal, an Asian Games individual medal is the only other bauble missing from Toni's collection. To date, she has won for the country an individual silver and a team gold at the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, a team silver at the Busan Asian Games in 2002, and scored a win at the SEA World Cup Malaysian Open last year. She has also been named National Rider of the Year by the Philippine Equestrian Federation and Equestrienne of the Year by the

Philippine Sports Association.

Toni entered her first competition when she was 10. It was a dressage event ("like ballet on horseback," she explains) at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga. She came in fifth out of six riders, but it was enough inspiration to keep her going.

You can say Toni got on a horse and never got off. "It's a passion, not just a hobby," she says.

There's also something very exhilarating about representing the country abroad, she adds. Although she's been to so many competitions before, each one feels like the first time, says Toni. She can't imagine not getting up each morning to go to training to represent the country. Her father, former Batangas governor J. Antonio Leviste, has been asking her when she plans to quit, but it's an idea Toni doesn't even want to think about.

"It's in my blood," she says. "Plus there's nothing better than hearing the Philippine National Anthem being played on foreign shoes."

Toni is still fixated on her goal of bagging an Olympic gold medal for the country—and doesn't plan to quit until she does. "We still have to get that gold," she says.

Fortunately for this 23-year-old, age in this sport isn't a problem. "The older you are, the better you get. Besides, this is about camaraderie between the rider and the horse, not about brute strength. It's probably the only sport in the world where men and women compete equally."

The partnership between horse and rider is crucial. In Toni's case, it almost derailed her Asian Games stint. Early this year, she lost her top mount, Globe Platinum Maktoub, to a fatal case of colic. This happened in April, two days before the World Cup final. Globe Platinum Maktoub was the same horse that Toni rode in the SEA Games. "She died in my arms, on the operating table," recounts Toni.

Although she was grieving for her horse, Toni knew she had to find a replacement if she was to train and get ready in time for the Doha Asian Games. "I really had to find a replacement for my horse, because Mikee Cojuangco was injured. So was Michelle Barrera, and her horse was also injured. Joker Arroyo was in school in the US."

But finding a replacement was easier said than done. First of all, competition horses—especially Olympic medal hopefuls—cost at least a million dollars. So Toni needed a sponsor to help her out. This is not unusual. The top riders in the world are sponsored by cash-heavy companies like Rolex,

Fortunately for this 23-year-old, age in this sport isn't a problem. "The older you are, the better you get. Besides, this is about camaraderie between the rider and the horse, not about brute strength. It's probably the only sport in the world where men and women compete equally."

Volvo and Mercedes Benz. "It's the nature of the sport," she explains.

Aside from the horses—"You need a couple of horses for training"—an equestrian athlete needs a groom, a farrier and a trainer. Fortunately, Toni has the support of several corporate sponsors in her bid for that Asian Games and, ultimately, that elusive Olympic gold.

Businessman Jean-Henri Lhuillier, husband of former Olympian Bea Lucero, was instrumental in helping Toni buy her new horse six weeks before the Asian Games. Just Jewels, formerly named Huldaskarin, is a top horse in Sweden's showjumping circuit and was a member of the Swedish

junior international team. While she would have wanted to train with Just Jewels longer, Toni is banking on the horse's ability, power and vast experience in the show ring as well as her training to power their tandem in the Asian Games, together with other members of Team Philippines. Joining Toni this year in the equestrian team are Jones Lanza, Paola Zobel and Danielle Cojuangco.

Asked to assess her chances, Toni admits that the Asian Games this year will be extra tough. Aside from the fact that she hasn't had that much time with her mount (ideally, rider and horse need six months to a year to develop a bond), all the Arab countries will be participating. Toni also regards Japan and Korea as fierce rivals for the gold. That also means that 90 percent of the competition she faces in Doha would be male.

But what happens if Toni finally earns a gold medal at the Olympics? Will she quit then? "Did you talk to my father before coming here? You sound just like him!" she laughs.

And who can blame Leviste senior? In the 15 years that Toni has been riding a horse, she has broken her collarbone twice, suffered two concussions and broken her left leg and her right toe. But she shrugs them off.

"Just part of the occupational hazard," she says. "You have to have confidence."

Getting back on the horse is the thing to do, she says. And the falls are worth it, Toni adds.

She remembers the first time she stood among the world's finest athletes at the Olympics. "Being among thousands of the strongest and fittest individuals in the world is really an overwhelming feeling," she says.

Next year, the series of qualifying events will start again. Will those events take Toni (who has converted to Islam) all the way to the Olympics? "*Insh'allah*," she says softly. "God willing." •

By Leica R. Carpo

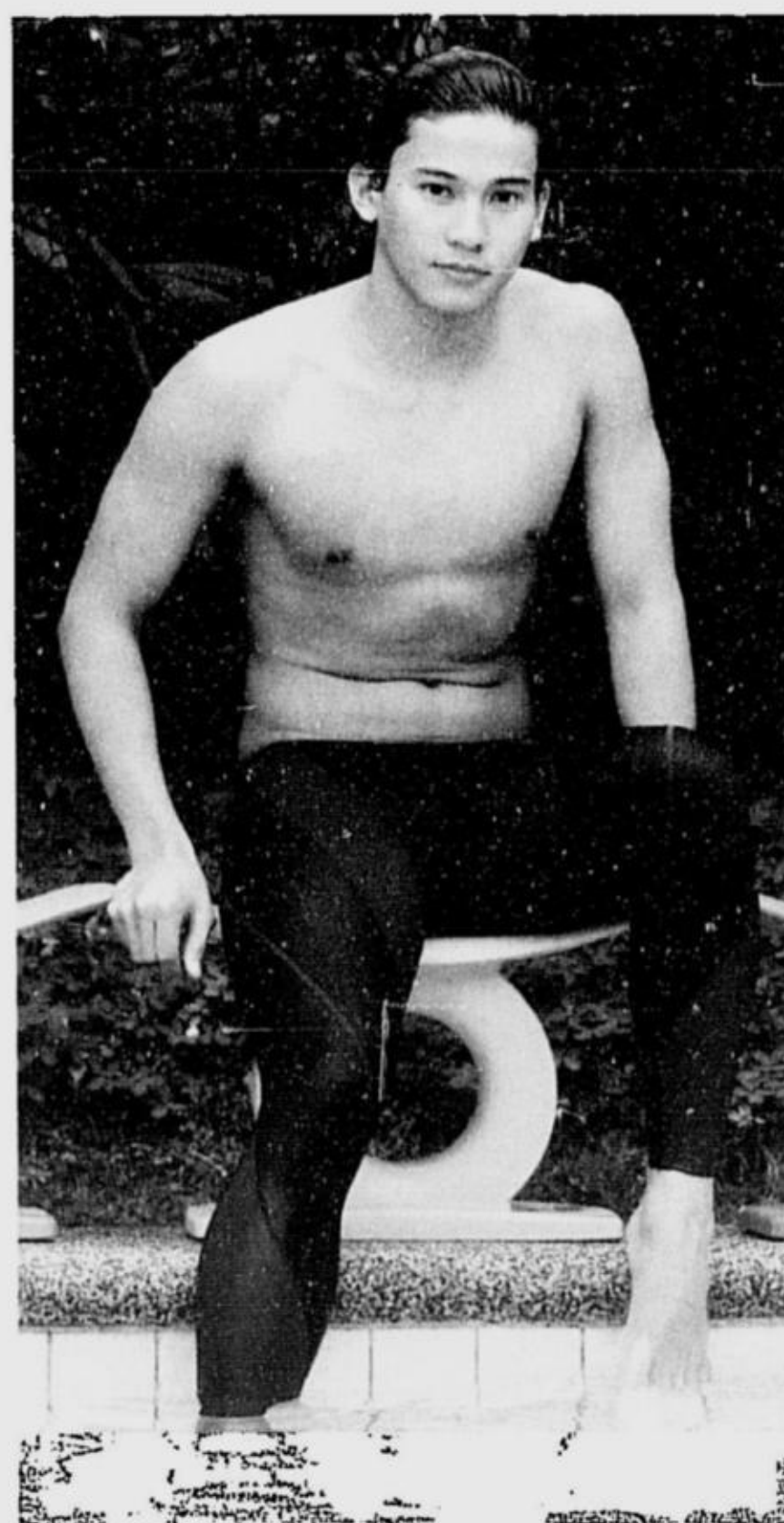
Photographs by Jim Guiao Punzalan



Enchong Dee, Philippine swimming hopeful, is an earnest 18-year-old—except that he trains four hours a day, and floats above the rest with his world-class butterfly stroke

SOMEONE on the cusp of something big—that's the feeling you get when meeting Enchong Dee (Ernest Lorenzo Dee) for the first time. He's an Olympic swimming hopeful, a heartthrob in the making, and a boy well on his way to becoming a man. Turning 18 last November 5, he's got the world before him, ripe for the taking. Is he up for the challenge? Can he conquer his doubts? Can he "fly" with the best?

Called "*Halimaw*" by his teammates because of his powerful kick and speed, Dee looks more teddy bear



then sea monster out of the water. Dressed in dark denims, a loose untucked black T-shirt, short hair neatly gelled and looking fresh out of the shower, his extra-wide shoulders are the only giveaway that he's an athlete.

In the Philippines, no one comes close to him in the butterfly, and those who have attempted to learn this stroke know that it's hands-down the hardest stroke to master, as it requires not only tremendous strength, but coordination. In fact, only five percent of swimmers have natural "fly" strokes, and thus it's considered a stroke for the elite few. Dee chose the stroke not because he wanted to be a show-off, but because, as a young boy, his coach's punishment was to make him practice the "fly" to the point that it became his favorite stroke.

Thrown in the pool at the age of 6, Dee showed his tremendous potential as soon as he started training in earnest. He won his first medal at the age of 7, as the most valuable player in his age group for the entire Luzon. It was his



"I think my weakness is my mental game, as I sometimes have doubts about my ability to win. But my coaches believe in me, and so I work that belief into myself and just make it happen."

first ever competition. Over 350 medals later (including stints at the SEA Games and Asian Games), he seems a veteran at an age when most guys are still thinking of what they want to be when they grow up. With the butterfly as his stroke of choice, he has not taken the easy path to his goal—a shot at an Olympic medal. The Philippines has never won an Olympic gold in swimming, although we've bagged two bronzes, one in 1928 and one in 1932. We've also brought home seven golds in the Asian games—four in 1951, two in 1954 and one in 1982.

The odds seem stacked against him, with 15 seemingly random choices of coaches. Consider, too, his first criteria for choosing a good coach, "someone who doesn't curse," followed by "someone who treats me maturely." It's not really solid ground for a future Olympic medal winner or aspiring athletic legend like his idol Michael Phelps, who, at the age of 19, won eight medals in the Olympics, including a gold for the 100-meter butterfly/medley, while breaking several world records. "I like Phelps not only because we have the same stroke, but because I admire his training, which is more mental than physical. I think my weakness is my mental game, as I sometimes have doubts about my ability to win. But my coaches believe in me, and so I work that belief into myself and just make it happen."

Dee's fastest time in the 100-meter butterfly is 56.5, which puts him at par with the world's top 10. Phelps' fastest

time in the 100 meters is 51.10. "I keep myself motivated by thinking about the future and becoming an example to others. I actually want to see people outdo me!"

Dee doesn't grow his nails (to touch the wall literally by a nail's breadth), or shave off his body hair like Phelps, who does it four times a year, right before his big competitions, to cut through water faster. He doesn't have lucky trunks (he has 20, which he rotates in no particular order) or visualize every win the night before competition (he used to, when he was younger). He doesn't even believe in luck; for him, it boils down to hard training every day—that's a year and a half until the 2008 games. Dee averages about 14 kilometers a day in the pool, so at that rate he would have swum some 7,665 kilometers by the time the Olympics come along. When asked about his strategy, he says it's all about discipline, hard work and eating extra vegetables. "I do get nervous before a race, but according to my friend that's a good thing, because it shows you're prepared and have given the race importance. But my first thought is always to enjoy the moment."

With a twice-a-day training schedule (5 a.m. to 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.) and school in between, does he even have a life outside the water? Like any 18-year-old, he has had his first bottle of beer (a San Mig Light), enjoys his junk food (caramel popcorn) and watches his fair share of TV. As expected, his future dates have to be



non-cursing, God-fearing, Japanese food-eating and smartly conversing girls. Not expected was the fact that she does not need to know how to swim or have a great body. "I sometimes get attracted to fat girls with a sense of humor," Dee says.

We should not be surprised if this boy/man brings home the gold. When you think about a pool hall janitor learning to play billiards, or a diminutive boxer from GenSan with a smiling face becoming a world contender, you realize there is no foolproof formula for making your dreams come true—you just have to make it happen one day at a time. •

By **Katrina A. Holigores**
 Photographs by Romy Homillada

A Filipina On The 'Terror Channel'

Veteran Filipina broadcast journalist Marga Ortigas has found yet another pioneering challenge: to add credibility to Al Jazeera, the network known mostly for airing anything Osama Bin Laden has to say



THE expression "24/7" has taken over the metropolis. Look around and you will see it—the closest fastfood joint is open 24/7, an up-and-coming cell phone service provider uses the catchphrase to attract new subscribers, and of course, when you have last minute party needs for booze or chips, you can get these from your neighborhood convenience store.

Probably the most recognizable worldwide of any 24/7 channel is CNN. So strong is their brand that they can boldly proclaim to jet-setting businessmen the world over that if a hotel isn't carrying them, get billeted somewhere else, and quick. The habit has made the 24/7 news channel No. 1 for the last decade. There is, of course, a choice. For those who prefer the UK version, there is the BBC. Not into the news? There are loads of documentaries and wildly entertaining reality shows one can still get some "education" from, such as Discovery, National Geographic and MTV.

For the predominantly Western-influenced audience here in the Philippines, it was a surprise to hear that former CNN London correspondent and producer Marga Ortigas, Filipina born and bred, had moved on to, of all things, an Arab network. Making the leap almost a year ago, Marga was back in the

country, heading the Manila Bureau of the Al Jazeera English channel. It sounded risky and ludicrous; wasn't Al Jazeera the same channel that promoted Bin Laden videos non-stop, almost in a propaganda manner? Or wasn't this the channel that focused more on Muslim affairs? For those who were more open-minded, Al Jazeera was a way to see the "other side" of the news, rather than an all-out promotion of Muslim-inspired action.

"Al Jazeera started out as the Arab network that gave a voice to an area of a world that really only had stage-controlled TV channels, such as those in Saudi Arabia and Iran," Marga explains. "The channel Al Jazeera came into being in 1996 to fill what was seen as a need out there, to bring out a more balanced perspective or to give voice to those who weren't allowed to speak due to state-controlled media. So, what started out as an experiment ended up being the fifth most recognized TV 'brand' that we know today."

There was and still is a lot of negativity that is aimed at the channel. "It was for a time known as the 'terror channel,'" says Marga, "but what it really is is a channel that is still trying to define itself, or redefine itself now with Al Jazeera English, launched this year, and how news is done." Marga also corrects the perception that the channel is a propaganda instrument. "I once monitored it, and they had 500 hours of Bin Laden as compared to about 5,000 hours of Bush. They just showed Bin Laden more than any other Western media channel did."

The process of choosing what goes on air still takes place at Al Jazeera Arabic and English headquarters in Qatar. "The producers sit down and argue about the programming grid, so

it is unfair for audiences to say that it is biased if they cannot understand the language and only look to the images to interpret the channel as a whole," Marga explains. "What people do not see is how many correspondents and producers have moved from CNN and BBC to this network. It is fully funded by the Emir, and for the first time in many, many years, we do not have to answer to businessmen or sponsors to make money. Also, the news is not coming from the West, so you don't

Marga made her own move to Al Jazeera after working with CNN's London Bureau. But the road to covering international news was long and colorful. People still do remember that Marga was a one-time commercial model and cover girl. She was a newscaster on "GMA Live," trained with Maria Ressa on "The Probe Team," and was the award-winning show's supervising producer at age 23. In 1996, she left to earn a master's degree in Literature in London. "For

me, it's all about telling stories," she said in a previous interview. "Journalism has nothing to do with it. At the end of the day, every big news is about a human being, and the only way it's going to make a difference is if it affects another person. The only way to do that is to tell a story that moves you."

She held down other unlikely jobs, including one with a UK remittance company, before joining CNN in London and cutting her teeth reporting from the frontlines in Baghdad.

Although not yet available locally, Al Jazeera English is already gaining ground, with an increasingly widening viewership in Europe and South America. "Probably the thing I remember most before I decided to shift jobs," recounts Marga, "was the job ad. It simply said, 'Everybody watches CNN, but who does CNN watch? Al Jazeera.'"

Hopefully, this network dedicated to grassroots storytelling will soon hit our channels 24/7, and give the viewing public a real look at the world according to Al Jazeera. Just don't forget that the woman who will be giving us that view is a Filipina. •



Telling a story that moves people: Marga wants to change perception that the Arab news channel is 'biased'

"We do stories people forget to look at. We are an international cast of characters who are telling stories in our own unique way."

have American and British people in suits telling you the news in a certain way, which still caters to one kind of audience. The motto is, 'Let's do the stories that people don't know about,' and we don't have to look at stories on the basis of whether they will rate or not. We do stories people forget to look at. We are an international cast of characters who are telling stories in our own unique way." Plus, the story is told so simply that even a grandmother in Laos can see how what is happening, and "it can still have an impact on her life."

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	3	8					7	
5			2					1
				1				4
			8				4	
		9		4			6	
	2				3			
7				9				
4					6			9
	8					3	2	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12.1"

© 2006 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	9	7	5	6	3	2	8
3	2	6	8	4	9	5	7	1
7	8	5	1	3	2	6	4	9
5	6	3	2	1	7	9	8	4
4	7	2	3	9	8	1	5	6
8	9	1	5	6	4	2	3	7
6	3	8	9	7	5	4	1	2
2	1	4	6	8	3	7	9	5
9	5	7	4	2	1	8	6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

sundayINQUIRERmagazine

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Volume 20 No. 42 December 17, 2006

Marriage, According to Fr. Ruben Tanseco (from page 2)

4. You can expect pain and difficulties to be part and parcel of your marriage, yet it is in working through the difficult times in our lives that we can begin to expand and grow and experience life more fully.

5. When a couple views difficulties as challenges for change and growth

rather than as reasons to blame the other or to stay adamantly stuck in each other's belief or position, then marriage would have been truly a path to the wholeness and fullness of life. •

Righteous Brother (from page 5)



recognition among Christian communities.

When he wasn't singing, Corpuz—who, as a child, rode with his dad on a bike and yelled "Napay!" while his father sold bread stored in a styrofoam box to the neighbors—was already talking up a storm. The one-time customer service voiceover at SM Megamall's Powerbooks and Music One store spent Friday nights at

Manila's artsy poetry place Sanctum, where he would recite the now-famous spoken-word lines of "Dedma." Months of repeating the mile-a-minute, no-time-to-breathe speech would eventually pay off. Standing before the stars of the GMA-7 comedy "Idol Ko Si Kap," he boldly performed the "Dedma" declaration and snagged a part on the show. Corpuz would also appear opposite Richard Gutierrez in the hit fantaserye "Sugo."

"I guess it's because a lot of people can relate to it," says Corpuz of the single's immense popularity. "At one point in your life, you either rejected somebody or were rejected by someone." This, by the way, was written from personal experience, with Corpuz being the "torpe" (geek) in the song.

But that's all in the past. Asked if he's seeing someone, Corpuz readily declares that he's already married—to Jasmine, a nursing student and fellow Christian he met, amazingly enough,

at his guitarist's birthday party only last July. Apparently, Jasmine, whom Corpuz describes as his total opposite, was set to join her fiancé in the States last September when the singer gave her an ultimatum. "It's like that line from our song: *Dalawa din lang naman ang posibleng sagot diyan, oo o hindi.* (There are only two possible answers—yes or no)."

A month later and much to her parents' dismay, the two eloped, "As in literally over the *bakod* (fence)," says Corpuz. Things have turned out well with all parties concerned, except maybe for Jasmine's ex-fiancé, who reportedly has yet to know about the marriage.

In this day and age of having their cake and eating it too, commitment-shy kind of guys can definitely learn a thing or two from the singer who has since shelved his "dedma" ways.

"Impulsive? Maybe. But I've waited 26 years for this," says Corpuz of finding true love. "This is the best thing that's ever happened in my life." •

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4	7	2	3	9	8	1	5	6
8	9	1	5	6	4	2	3	7
6	3	8	9	7	5	4	1	2
2	1	4	6	8	3	7	9	5
9	5	7	4	2	1	8	6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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RETAKES OF PRECEDING FRAME

KWENTONG TAMBAY

mga kwento ng isang sira-ulong
Overseas Filipino Worker

Medyo basos. Nakakatawa siya. Nakakabaliw. Nakakagulat. At minsan, syempre, nanan nakakalanga. Sa mga pahinang ito ay malakita at mababasa natin ang isang tolong Juan de la Cruz na muna'y tinatamad, muna'y puno ng mga datsay na damdamin, at panmasa-munsa, dri ay dndemonyo at dumadag.

Manuel L. Quezon III

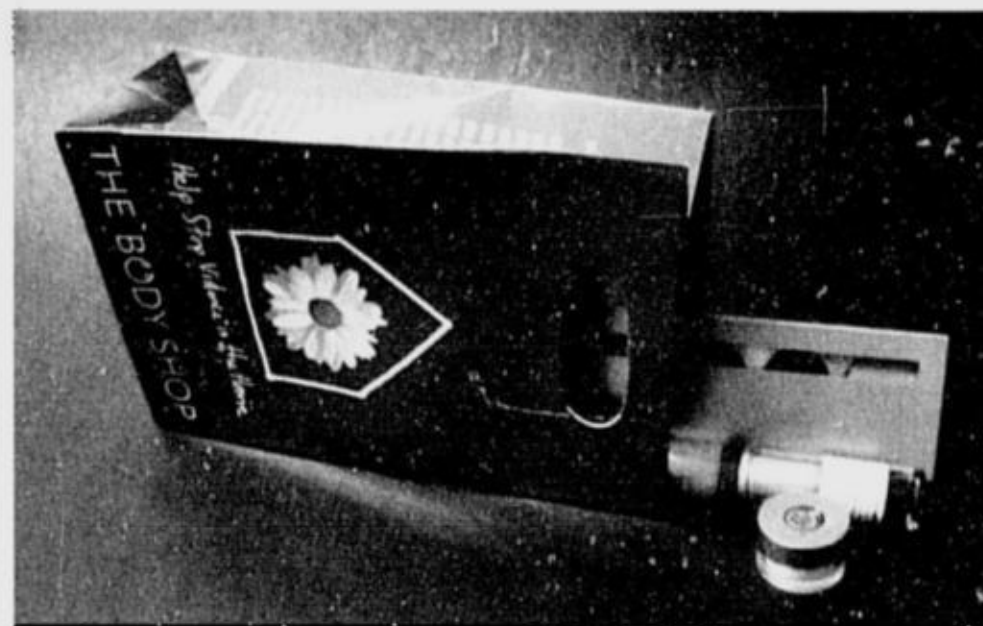


NICANOR DAVID JR.



The view from any corner

HE isn't just one of the most opinionated bloggers out there. Nicanor "Batjay" David, Jr. is also one of the best. This instrument engineer-turned-OFW (notably also the brother of Pinoy Rock icon Howlin' Dave) has been writing his acerbic and insightful column on everything from holidays to national identity in his trademark everyman English and Filipino (and sometimes both at the same time) with wit and oh-it-hurts humor. For your own good, check them out at <http://kwentongtambay.nicanordavid.com>. Sometimes profane, often poignant, but always powerful, David's columns are now in hard copy and on bookshelves in *"Kwentong Tambay: Mga Kwento ng Isang Sira-ulong Overseas Filipino Worker"* (PSICOM Publishing, P120). The Q&As alone are worth the retail price. But go further and check out his take on why Pinoys go abroad, and *Unkyel Batjay* explains it all for you. *"Kwentong Tambay"* really is about the man who watches the world go by yet misses absolutely nothing. Just read a few pages and find out why this book is worth taking home with you, wherever you are in the world. **Ruel S. De Vera**



Roger Carpio

Soap for A Life

"Domestic violence is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time, affecting millions of women and children around the world." That's the grim announcement on the home page of The Body Shop, the bestselling line of body and bath products that's also long been known to aggressively promote a variety of worthy causes, from animal rights to fair trade. The Body Shop also recently partnered with the United Nations to come up with the study called "Behind Closed Doors—The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children," developed by Unicef, The Body Shop and the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. The findings have been disturbing, generally pointing to the fact that children who live with domestic violence are at greater risk for a wide range of social afflictions. For The Body Shop's 2006 Stop Violence in the Home Campaign, the company has incorporated the cause in their famous packaging, hoping to heighten awareness of the problem. Buy a Daisy Soap or Mint Lip Care Stick, and you help raise funds for children who are victims of domestic violence. Visit any branch of The Body Shop for more information, and to do your share. •

Want some wasabi with that?

AMONG foodies who prefer the good stuff to the gimmicks, terms like "Global Asian cuisine" could be off-putting when you think of the main bane of nouvelle—you know, huge, beautiful plates with portions so small they hardly tickle your stomach lining. Fortunately, there are a few chefs who mean what they say, and the gifted Vicky-Rose Pacheco of the Chateau 1771 group of restaurants is one of them. Remember the boneless crispy *pata* of Sentro in Greenbelt, probably the most unpredictable Pinoy restaurant in town? Or the sublime pastas and excellent main courses of Chateau 1771 in El Pueblo, always dependable for European favorites? Making their mark in the sizzling-hot new Serendra Complex (see our Menu column for a rundown of other restos), Pacheco and the Chateau group's maverick Ricky Gutierrez have opened Portico, where Global Asian cuisine means just that—hearty portions,



Portico's Pan-Fried 'Mameng'

universal appeal, and a whole world of exotic flavors. It takes some kitchen panache to turn out a tofu omelet that's light yet tasty, or to take a local sea delicacy like *mameng* and make it a cosmopolitan delight with lemon butter, shallots, capers and—that Asian touch again—pickled ginger. Or how about Portico's version of the Pomelo Salad, with shrimps, heart of palm, cucumber, peanuts and onions in a healthy Thai dressing? With airy interiors and a classy working crowd, the ambiance is also a winner. You'll never have to go hungry on contemporary cooking again. •

Portico is at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City. Call 856-0581 for reservations.

of sweet and sour. It was so delicately flavorful that it was soothing.

For appetizers, you must try the Mieng Kham. You get a betel leaf, sprinkle it with nam prik pao sauce, some nuts, lime and some chili pepper; roll the leaf like a cigar; and then bite into it like you would *lumpia*. The flavors gently burst in your mouth. Lovely. For your main dish, have the Green Curry Chicken, which is not spicy at all and has very tender chicken meat. And don't skip the Pad Thai. It is very good pad thai, the result of true dedication: I am told Mrs. Ysmael flies to Thailand just to get the ingredients herself. The prices are reasonable too, each dish ranging only from P250 to P400 and everything in proportions big enough to share.

Guava

Guava has what they call "modern Filipino" cuisine. It's a refreshing take on traditional Filipino cooking, although maybe the flavors need improvement. The *kare-kare* was rather bland, and although the menu said the *bagoong* was flavored with chocolate, which sparked my curiosity, the chocolate could hardly be distinguished, although the saltiness of the *bagoong* was definitely tempered. So the chocolate resulted in the *bagoong* losing instead of gaining flavor, which I would think is the opposite of what they aspired to achieve. The *Monggonisa*, which is *monggo* with *longanisa*, tasted like ... *monggo* ... and *longanisa*! Nothing special with either, and I'm thinking

there should have been something special about them combined, but alas it is yet to be seen. And don't even bother with the *pritchon*. They give you three pieces, all on a diet inside, and the pita isn't great, although to their credit the sauces were pretty good. Do order the *tilapia*, though, which is



Silk's flavorful Mieng Kham, betel leaf eaten 'lumpia'-style

mixed with a sweet chili sauce. And try their *adobo* for a different take on this national favorite. They are quite generous with the chicken and have mellowed down the classic *adobo*'s salty nature. It's worth a curious try.

Cupcakes by Sonja

This is the shop you cannot skip. There is no other place for dessert! You cannot, cannot, leave Serendra without trying this wonderful girl's bits of heaven. You must, must, must try the Chocolate Cream Pie. Sonja's product list describes it as a "rich, luscious Belgian chocolate cream in Oreo crust and topped with mountful of whipped cream and sprinkled with

Oreo bits." But to picture it: think three layers, like a chocolate mousse, except the bottom's a slightly thicker version of an Oreo with a darker chocolate flavor and the top is a generous load of whipped cream. I think she sprinkles it with *gayuma* (magic potion) because I literally

stopped mid-sentence when I took my first bite to exhale "Mmmm!" Make sure your fork digs into the Oreo as well to appreciate the full benefit of the cake. My second favorite is the Valrhona Milk Choco-Hazelnut Tart, which is everything a good chocolate cake should be: a dark, bitter crust with a milky sweet middle and a rich, slightly dark, glossy topping. While we're on the subject of chocolate, you can also try her Melt-In-Your-Mouth Flourless Chocolate Cake, which is rich and dense, unlike other flourless cakes that end up a

little hollow. If you are not into chocolate or don't want anything too sweet, go for the carrot cupcake. It is, like I said, not very sweet, has surprisingly chewy shreds of carrots in the mix, and a very creamy topping that you can just spoon off if you're allergic to sweet. I like her take on the carrot cake because it's not crumbly at all. In fact, all her cakes are very compact and dense, leading to very bold and distinctive, yet very well blended flavors. Her shop is addictive. She should also sell Lipitor.

Nuff said? I don't think so. There's still Gaudi, Abe, Fez, Mezze Luna, and so many more coming. But this should be enough to keep you hopping for now! •

Figure It Out

320: Total number of medals won by Filipino athletes at the Asian Games since the Asiad's inception in 1951

26: Total number of medals won by Filipino athletes at the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea

P1 million: The Philippine government's monetary incentive for gold medal winners at the 2002 Asian Games

P150,000: Maximum monthly salary for a rookie cager in a Philippine Basketball Association team

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research



Why not the world?

- Lea Salonga

Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.

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INQUIRER



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Overhauled

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